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Reincarnated into a Werewolf, the Demon Lord Servants

by Hyougetsu

[Novel Updates](#)

Translation Group: [Asian Hobbyist](#)

Epub: [Trollo WN/LN EPUB](#)

Chapter 55: The Army Stealthily Closes In

After establishing a secret agreement with Shaldir, for the first time in a while, I went to report to the Demon King.

“It looks like you have been quite busy, Vaito.”

“Yes, my lord. I was finishing up the side jobs.”

The demon lord gave a wry smile, as I answered honestly.

“I see.”

“Defeating the fake hero and exposing his identity, crushing the Northern Miraldia army’s morale, bringing the enemy magicians to our site, and establishing a secret pact with the trade city, Shaldir, are just side jobs, huh?”

“Well, yes...”

Compared to the demon lord’s objectives these are nothing but side jobs. I should be the one putting these in order.

The demon lord put the reports on the desk, finding it all to be very amusing.

“If these are side jobs, it’d seem that there are nothing but side jobs in the demon lord army. If you seek even greater tasks, I’m fine with abdicating the throne of the demon to you.”

“Please wait a minute, my lord! If you were to renounce your throne, I would also leave the demon lord army and return to the country-side.”

“You really are a man without greed.”

As the demon king laughed heartily, I couldn’t help but laugh as well.

Be at ease, Demon King’s aide.

“Good job on the matter with the fake hero. And how is the issue of the fake saint coming along?”

“For the time being, I’m keeping her as my close aide. She is gentle and a good-natured person with no greater ambitions.”

Lash's illusions are first class. They can be put to use in real battle situations. Although she is a coward, she's a good person at her core."

Demon King nodded, agreeing thoroughly.

"You're very skilled at converting our enemies. Compared to your skills in that field, I am lacking ."

"You think too highly of me."

It's just that I cannot deal the final blow and somehow they end up sticking to me...

Well, since I have been praised, I kept quiet about it.

"Your abilities are even working on Shaldir's governor general."

"Actually, that has not been going so well either..."

I honestly told the Demon King about how I misjudged Alam's personality and ended up frightening him carelessly.

"I was not really good at persuading people in the first place. It's just that I was a former human being. I didn't quite notice how Alam was desperately pretending to be a tactician either."

"Hmm, I see."

The Demon King nodded.

"But Vaito, unlike others, the concept of acting to be oneself does not exist within the demon race to begin with. There is no one who can grasp the young man named Alan's true feelings."

Indeed that is true.

The demon tribe does not need to create a persona. Everything is decided by strength. Even being the same rank, one can have a vague understanding of who is stronger.

If the other party is stronger, it is fine doing what they tell you to do, and if they are weaker, you can do as you please. If needed, even protect them. That is all there is to it.

The Demon King started talking quietly.

"The human society is complicated. There are many points the demon race, who live according to a clear and simple philosophy, find hard to comprehend. For that reason, people like you and I are needed. However, there will be many hardships."

The Demon King laughed wryly which made me laugh too in reflex.

"Not at all. Compared to the pressure the Demon King is going through, these hardships are nothing. Please leave it to me."

Ah, this is bad. I again promised without due consideration.

The Demon King agreed to my words and said, "If the Governor General Alam sides with you, he'll be turning the Miraldia Alliance into his enemy. When that happens, the true value of the demon lord army will be put to the test. Whether we can protect them or not."

"Yes, my lord."

That is certainly a concern.

After all, the human of this world recklessly kill their own kind... No, I probably think because of the peaceful times I've been through during my previous existence. I was so carefree that my judgement in that area might have grown lenient.

"fufu..."

Demon King was oddly happy and laughed. So I asked with a tilt of my head.

"What is the matter, my lord?"

"No, it's nothing. Hmm, I see... hmm hmm."

Why are you laughing so much, Demon King?

"Vaito."

"Yes, my lord."

"With the expansion of our territory, on we will need even greater military strength from now. My right hand man, I bestow five hundred knights of the Blue Scale Knights Order under your command."

Speaking of the Blue Scale Knights Order, they're the elites of the demon

king's army's first division, lead by second-in-command Bartz.

"Y-you must not do that, Demon King! They are the shield which protects you, your majesty!"

But the Demon King shook his head.

"What they must protect is not me but the future of the demon race. And that does not lie here, it lies in Rune Height."

The Demon King stood up and placed his hand on my shoulder.

"After consulting Bartz beforehand, as you are of the same first division, he willingly accepted."

"But then your majesty's protection will be..."

The Crimson Scale Knight Order, who rival the Blue Scale Knight Order in strength, were dispatched to the north.

Many of the first division infantry forces are in Grunstadt Castle but infantry alone does not provide a peace of mind.

"Don't worry, Vaito. I will protect myself. If can't even do that, I can't call myself the Demon King."

The Demon King laughed.

"Thanks to such skilled retainers, I have a lot of free time. If I don't do things suited to a Demon King occasionally, I would start to feel uneasy."

"... Then I shall humbly accept."

I bowed deeply and respectfully accepted the Demon King's kindness.

"My subordinates are also in high spirits being able to fight alongside Vaito, the one who killed the hero."

Bartz said as we marched alongside.

"The one I defeated was a fake hero so I can't really boast about it."

"But it is also true that he was a threat to the second division. Well done defeating him."

They were riding on bipedal dragon-like creatures called Kiryuu (mount

dragons). Kiryuu cannot carry heavy loads but since they have two feet, they are able to make tight turns.

And their greatest forte is their nature.

Kiryuus are carnivores, so they're natural enemies of horse riders. And thus, horse riders, instinctively do not like fighting against Kiryuus.

They can be called the anti-cavalry unit.

But they don't feel comfortable being rode on by anything other than dragonewts.

Thanks to that, I had walk on foot. An ordinary horse cannot march together with them, so I could not ride a horse.

Even though I am also a second-in-command...

"You've been switching between grinning and feeling down. Is something wrong?"

"N-no. I'm glad to be able to fight alongside the Blue Scale Knight Order, but on the other hand, I am also keenly aware of the weight of the responsibility."

As I said that, Bartz cracked a smile.

"That goes for us too. To be of more use to Vaito, we are focusing our energy at being more diligent."

Very reliable.

However, my unit is getting even more disordered...

When I arrived at Rune Height with the Blue Scale Knights, the inujin (dog-man) corps were making a place for the kiryuu.

"Ah, it's lord Vaito."

"Welcome back, Vaito."

"Uwaa, a real dragon!"

The place you guys are building right now is the place for these kiryuu to rest. So why are you so surprised?

"Lord Vaito, can we ride it too?"

“No, it’s impossible. Only dragonewts can ride it.”

“Ehh... that’s sad.”

Just go back and do your job already.

The exhaustion from the journey still remained when I reached Rune Height.

When I was thinking about what to do for the food for the dragonewt soldiers and the kiryuu, Irya came barging in.

“This is bad! The Miraldia Alliance army is marching towards Shaldir from the north!”

“What?! Who reported it?!”

“It’s a fast horse from a Rune Height trade merchant! The army consists of two thousand cavalry and two thousand infantry from the reserved army!”

“What about siege weapons?”

“It seems nobody saw siege weapons.”

“Since there are no siege weapons, I don’t think they’re seriously trying to attack Shaldir. Perhaps it’s some sort of political act.”

“But I had a bad feeling about it.”

I stood up.

“Call the werewolf corps, centaur corps, and the Blue Scale Knights Order. Alam might be in danger.”

Chapter 56: Trade City Shaldir Rescue Operation

(Part 1)

“Now, let us head toward Shaldir to provide reinforcement!”

I shouted in front of the centaur soldiers, dragonewt cavalry and werewolf corps.

“However, in the eyes of the public, Shaldir is on the side of Miraldia. Because of that, this time, each corps will have to move differently from usual. Bear that in mind.”

“Roger!”

Blue Scale Knights Order, lead by aide Bartz, bowed along with Saches and centaur corps.

“Understood.....”

Since the demon kind act rashly right away, I felt worried about it, but if it's them then it will probably be fine.

“All mebers of the werewolf corps, transform! Well then, GO!”

I transformed along with the werewolf corps and departed along with all the cavalries. Naturally, I was leading in front of them.

“Oi Vaito, you are the captain, so keep to the back”

I never thought the muscle-brained elder brother Gurney would say that to me.

Elder sister Fern also nodded.

“That’s right. By the way, which team is in charge of Vaito for this week? ”

“Aah, it’s mine.”

Jerich and his team raised their hands.

What’s going on?

"Wait a minute, what's with the "in charge of Vaito"? I did not hear anything about this."

"It is to guard and keep a look out for you so that you do not run straight ahead into the battlefield. We will not accept any objection"

I am the captain of the werewolf corps, you know. Don't decide that by yourself.

"Now, now, captain. Just give orders from a safe place."

"If you die, we will have to return to that isolated village and dig potatoes again, after al."

"Besides, if you do that, what will we say to the Demon Lord? Consider it a little."

Before I knew it, everyone had started worrying about me...

Then Jerich ran up and tapped my shoulder.

"Don't worry captain. We will protect you."

"Even with four of us combined, we may be weaker than captain, isn't it?"

"Well, we can do something even if it's just becoming his shield."

The werewolves in Jerich corps were laughing comfortably.

If I try to do anything reckless, then these guys will be even more reckless in trying protect to me. However, that will put my subordinates in danger.

Ah, that's right.

This is why the Demon King does not go to the frontline.

Our opponents this time were two thousand soldiers and cavalry. On the other hand, we had one thousand soldiers.

We can't win if we fight strike from the front, but of course, we will not fight normally. It's war after all.

"Woddo corps, go north and stretch the net. Absolutely do not engage them."

"Yosh, my arms are itching to fight."

A former mercenary white werewolf laughed happily.

And like that four werewolves broke away from the formation and disappeared into a cloud of dust.

Because there is no GPS or smartphones in this world, it's difficult to determine the enemy's position. However, if you are able to do it, you can immediately dominate them.

Since there were infantry units in the alliance army along with cavalry, they had to march at infantry speed. If they only had cavalry, then we would have needed to change our plan.

On the other hand, everyone with us were able to march at the speed of cavalry. All one thousand of them aligned.

However, by the time Rune height got informed about the Alliance army approaching, the Alliance army should have moved a considerable distance. The news does not travel based on real-time, after all.

I could only hope that the Allied army had not arrived at Shaldir.

"But Vaito-dono, is this strategy really going to work?"

Aide Bartz anxiously asked me.

"If governor general Alam betrays us, we will be caught between a pincer attack."

There was also that probability. But I replied, "If that happens, it can't be helped. We will use our speed advantage and leave at once. Also, what we do will not change either way."

"That is true"

I didn't think Alam will betray me.

If the fervent speech back then was an act to deceive me, he must be a really great actor. If that is the case, then he must have been able to manage the relationship with Miraldia from the very beginning.

So it will probably be fine. But just in case, I also prepared for it.

"I see it!"

I heard someone's voice from the centaur corps, which was in the lead. Soon

after that, a similar voice came from other corps as well.

The walls of Shaldir were faintly visible through the hazy cloud of sand in the distance.

There was no sign of the Miraldia army yet.

Looks like we made it in time.

On top of a hill a little further from there, I ordered the werewolf corps.

“Werewolf corps, undo your transformation! Standby here! Hamam corps, go to Shaldir!”

The werewolf corps returned to their human form and squat down on the spot.

Hamam had visited Shaldir several times before and he was an acquaintance of Alam.

Let's contact Alam first.

He must be surprised to see the Demon King's army.

“Centaur corps go around the eastern gate vicinity! Blue Scale Knights Order, lineup by the west gate!”

Shaldir is a trade city, but it can't be helped if the castle gate is only at the east and west.

There was a lake at the north side so it can't be helped, but there is also a reason for why they didn't make a gate toward the south.

They had limited guards, so they did not have enough guards to station if they increased the number of gates.

Therefore, it was possible to temporarily isolate Shaldir from the outside by merely blockading the two gates.

“Saches, do not engage them unless they betray us.”

Hearing my word, the silent centaur soldiers nodded.

“I know. It is the skill of a true warrior to ascertain not only when to fight but also when they must fight. I will lead the soldiers without any problem.”

"As usual, you talk so well when going into fight."

"Ah... is that so..."

While blushing a little, Saches lead his subordinate and galloped on.

"Then, I will also be on my way."

Aide Barts gallantly rode his dragon and ran along with his subordinates.

I saw how gallant the appearance of the famous Blue Scale Knights Order was, just like in the rumors.

I, along with the werewolf corps, observed the situation.

The gate in Shaldir was closed, and the blue scale knight order surround the west gate. They really prepared the formation to attack at any time, and they didn't move.

They didn't shoot any arrows from the gates. It was going well so far.

We just had to wait for the reserve army to arrive.

After a while, Hamam's corps came back.

"As expected, it seems Alam didn't know anything about it. He was surprised."

As I thought.

Hamam continued.

"When I asked about the Miraldia army's intention, he said they might want to forcibly station their troops."

I see they didn't care about what the governor general wanted.

However, if two thousand soldiers came intruding, I wonder if they would have had enough places to sleep or enough food to eat.

Well, that is none of my concern though...

On the other hand, a strange report arrived from a member of Woddo corps.

"Miraldia Allied army confirmed. It consists of three hundred cavalry and five hundred infantry units. The enemy are marching in formation and the cavalry is on the lead. According to old man Woddo, it seems to be heavy cavalry and

light infantry.”

“Does the number not fit somehow?”

The werewolves just looked at each others’ faces.

There were two major possibilities.

The first was that the remaining twelve hundred troops exist and there was a gap in the march, or a possibility of a detached force waiting to ambush.

The other possibility was that there was a simple mistake in counting.

The one who brought in the report was not a soldier, but a civilian trader. It is not always possible to accurately grasp the number of a marching army from the highway.

The worst scenario would be that the remaining twelve hundred were going towards Rune Height.

“If that’s the case, then I can’t relax here,” I thought. If push comes to shove, Lash could take command of the skeleton soldiers, but she was an amateur as a soldier.

Should I go back?

I was worried, but I needed to organize the situation.

The enemies were fewer in number than us right now. In addition, they were in marching formation. In that case, we would not lose if we were to fight as it is.

The only possibility of us losing will arise if Alam betrayed us.

In that event, around three hundred soldiers of Shaldir will come flank us.

Due to the vagueness of situation, I could not grasp the direction the battle would go towards.

However, we can just run away if Alam betrays us. That’s why I picked the corps that enabled us to run away and shake off the cavalry.

More importantly, we must protect Alam if the Miraldia army tries to do anything strange. If we fail here, there is also a possibility that the secret agreement could be destroyed.

This is the time to fight.

When needed, I will rampage along with the werewolf corps.

I resolved my mind and ordered the werewolf corps.

“The centaur corps and Blue Scale Knights Order wait for further orders. Werewolf corps disguised as refugees will go towards Shaldir. The Jerich corps and I will join the Woddo corps.”

“Roger!”

Everyone’s voice came together.

I raised my voice as to not lose to the pressure of having over a thousand lives under my command.

“Let’s go!”

Chapter 57: Trade City Shaldir Rescue Operation

(Last Part)

I, along with my escort, Jerich corps and Woddo corps, silently watched over the situation of the war from a hill which stood slightly away from the highway.

There were three hundred cavalry units, and when I looked more carefully, I became certain that they were heavy cavalry. The horses were also wearing the armor.

On the other hand, there were five hundred infantry in lightweight equipment. They wore expensive chainmail and their weapons, which I could confirm, were bows, short spears, and swords.

“That’s very strange.”

Hearing my whisper, Jerich also tilted his head.

“That’s strange, captain. These guys are dressed as if they’re saying “We spent a lot of money, you know?”

“You also think so?.”

They might be able to capture Shaldir with that number but I did not understand where they were planning to use their costly equipment.

It’s fine for the infantry to use chainmail, but I feel it will not be as effective for the price against the bows during castle seige.

Woddo jii-san, who was accustomed to the battlefield, leisurely whispered.

“They have probably come here to scare Shaldir a little. It happens quite a lot, showing off army to make better negotiation.”

“I see, but to use such precious iron... Oh captain, look!”

Jerich grabbed my shoulder.

I observed the situation. The Infantry was marching while surrounding a carriage.

It was probably an prisoner carriage, made from thick planks and iron plates.

"They are probably looking to restrain Alam as well."

I was not sure if they were being serious or just appealing, but I understood their purpose.

I'll prepare the dragon ball.... which is also known as the signal ball.

"If those guys enter by crossing the lake, we'll attack at once."

"Roger, captain."

The Miraldia army who were going south would collide into the Shaldir army north of the lake.

And thus they began to move to the west along the shores of the lake.

If they went by the east shore, the soldiers would be exposing their right side to Shaldir but if they go by the west then they would expose their left side.

From that side, the heavy cavalry shield would be most effective. Looks like they are being wary about it.

At that time, the movement of Miraldia army became slower.

It seems they noticed that the demon king army had surrounded Shaldir's gate.

"Now!"

"Okay, captain!"

Jerich launched the signal ball.

It was the signal to attack.

At that moment, the Blue Scale Knights Order, which had been lined up at the east gate, changed their direction in unison.

The Kiryuu, which the dragonewt ride, formed a row as if they were a single living being. The level of their skill was frightening.

Miraldia army quickly responded to it. As expected of veterans.

Their heavy cavalry tried to reorganize their formation.

But on their left was the lake. They could not spread out.

Because there was nowhere else to go, they spread out greatly to the right. They lined up horizontally in a single line. It looked like they were going to assault with the cavalry's spears.

However, the Blue Scale Knights Order did not give them the time to do anything.

They nimbly moved and killed the heavy cavalry who were still not done changing their formation.

Although the bipedal Kiryuu was inferior in charging, they were far superior in maneuverability compared to the warhorses.

Moreover, the fangs and body odor invoked fear in the horses. The armors on the horses wouldn't prove to be of much use against these.

"Ooh..."

"That's amazing!"

I can understand their amazement.

The war was really one-sided.

The heavy cavalry who brought long spears as a demonstration was rushed into melee combat before they could form a row.

They drew their swords hastily, but this time, their horses started panicking.

In addition, aide Bartz moved the corps into a formation that cornered the heavy cavalry into the lake.

For the normal cavalry, the water was not that deep. But if the heavy cavalry fell from their horses, then they will certainly drown to their death. They can't afford to enter the water.

Moreover, the horses were on the verge of panic.

At this point, the command of the heavy cavalry completely fell into chaos.

Some who wanted to create some distance between them by advancing into the water

Some who decided to turn around and resolved to fight back.

Some who escaped towards Shaldir.

Some who tried to escape towards the back of the army.

The heavy cavalry who resolved to fight met a miserable fate.

“I am the Blue Knight Bartz! I will be an opponent for those who do not want to be a disgrace to their military fame!”

Aide Bartz drew his sword and declared this with a loud voice. He was a master in double sword technique.

He wielded his two katanas while riding on his Kiryuu and took out all the heavy cavalry near him.

Despite the fact that his sword was light, his blows seemed to be terribly heavy. Their armors were shattered and crushed until they fell from their horses.

The number of the unburdened horses around the aide Bartz’s was steadily increasing. It was like a blank space in the battlefield.

It would feel like his usual gentle leader appearance was a lie watching this.

But Miraldia army didn’t stay silent.

The following infantry corps were preparing their short spears and started to surround aide Bartz and his corps. Now the one who was being driven toward the lake was the Blue Scale Knights Order.

However, the leadership of aide Bartz was brilliant.

“Turn around!”

Taking advantage of the maneuverability skills of the Kiryuus to the fullest, the Blue Scale Knights Order was withdrawn to Shaldir. They were able to escape from being surrounded.

And this time, the heavy cavalry who ran away to Shaldir were being annihilated without mercy.

The remaining heavy cavalry at the infantry side witnessed this and lost their nerve.

Their friendly troops decreased in number before their eyes and in order to

save their allied army, they reorganized their formation and started to charge.

The battlefield moved from the lake to the west gate of Shaldir. As to not be noticed, we chased behind them.

"Let's move."

"Yes"

As far as I could see, the remaining number of heavy cavalry were only over a hundred and the others were either dead or injured. The ones who got strayed from their units could not fight right away. They had taken devastating damage.

Meanwhile, the five hundred infantry soldiers of the Miraldia army was still in good condition. It looked like the enemy decided to fight with infantry as their main force. Even though their specialization was a short spear, the cavalry was a nasty opponent for them.

However, at this time, the sound of the hooves began to roar.

"Proud warriors, show them our way of fighting which will not ashame our ancestor spirit!"

"Oooooh!"

Five hundred centaurs from the east gate, came from the south side of Shaldir. They sought and charged the enemy while shooting arrows.

They immediately regrouped with the Blue Scale Knights Order.

Unlike the horses, the centaurs were not afraid of Kiryuus, so it was possible for them to form a formation with them. Now there were a thousand soldiers.

Because of this reinforcement, the infantry's courage was crushed, as expected. Their formation began to collapse.

With double the number of cavalry than the enemies, it was no longer a fight. It would have been different if they were armed with long spears and big shields but with light equipment, they would only fall prey.

Even a volley of arrows came raining down upon them.

On top of that, they could not run away from horses on foot.

If they desperately keep resisting like this then they will get annihilated.

At this time, Shaldir's west gate opened.

Along with the loud sound of a trumpet, fully armed infantry came out in formation. They raised up a battle flag of the Guards' army.

Longswords and big shields, all in a dense formation. It resembled the phalanx of the Spartan army.

The number was around three hundred, but it was quite a threat for the cavalry.

Furthermore, they took a shape that would pierce the back of demon king army.

"Now! Save our brethren!"

Owing to the hearing sense of the werewolves, the sound of Alam could be heard from far away. He was so eager.

Shaldir should have only one hundred twenty people, but three hundred soldiers of guard corps were slowly approaching toward demon king army. Is that okay, to take out all you have like that?

Meanwhile, the five hundred infantry soldiers of the Miraldia army rebuilt their formation to be protected by the heavy cavalry.

Because of that formation, it became unfavorable for demon king army.

"Yosh, it is about time."

I ordered Jerich to launch the signal bullet. The signal bullet was certainly faster than a messenger. I can't let go of it anymore, can I...?

The centaur corps and the Blue Scale Knights Order saw the retreat order, then immediately withdrew from the battlefield. The majority of the opponents was infantry and the remaining cavalry riders were also wearing heavy equipment so they were slow. It was impossible for them to pursue.

In a cloud of sand, the demon king army vanished into the direction of Rune Height.

Yosh, it's going according to the plan for now.

I'll leave the rest to Alam.

Chapter 58: The Shine of Disaster

As I waited for the werewolf troop to return, I observed the scenario of the castle gate with a telescope.

The scattered worn out heavy cavalry units were gathering up from here and there. Some were staggering, having lost their precious horses.

The war flag, which had gotten all wet in the lake, was damply dangling.

It was hard to even look at these elites, who had prided themselves in their dignity, now all tattered and lifeless.

The infantry were all uninjured but they were laying on the ground, completely exhausted. They had probably prepared to die.

Before long, Alam walked up to them, meeting the leader of the heavy cavalry, who was also walking towards him, halfway.

They were too far, so I could not listen to their conversation but I could see the leader lowering his head many times.

“Looks like it went well.”

I said, as the returning werewolf troop were posing triumphantly.

“That was an easy victory!”

“We did nothing at all, though!”

“We wish we could have gone wild a bit, too!”

It seems that they were actually pretending to be happy, and were actually expressing their disappointment to me.

“I had no choice, okay?! If Alam has truly betrayed us, then it will be your turn!”

I had completely believed in Alam but with all these lives entrusted to me as the leader, I cannot afford to be so naive.

And so, if Alam had betrayed us, my plan was to make the werewolf troops, who were concealed in that confusion, start a fire in the city.

If there's a fire in the city, Alam would definitely prioritise it and retreat his army.

After all, his city is much more important than the northern people.

As a result, one could say I was worried for nothing but, it is always best to be in a situation where you do not need to use your trump card.

Afterwards, we observed the situation in front of the castle gate.

It looked like both Alam and the commander of the Miraldia standing army had opened up to each other.

If something happened, I was planning on sending the werewolf troop but it looked like that was not necessary.

"Alright, let's go back at once. And celebrate our victory with meat! From now on it's the diplomat's turn."

"Yosshaa!"

"Yay! Meat!"

"Even though we did nothing at all!"

Give it a rest, you guys.

This time around, I intentionally gave Alam the chance to betray us.

If he had seriously thought of doing it, he could have easily done so.

But he chose to not betray and go through things just as I had imagined.

He might plan on double-crossing at a more major situation but, considering his personality, the chances of that are quite low.

At a glance, he would look like a strategist but he is relatively passionate inside.

Later, after confirming the Miraldia army had withdrawn, I headed towards Shaldir again.

"Thanks to you, we're saved, Vito-dono."

Alam welcomed us with a wholehearted smile.

"It looked like they were planning to put him under questioning at first but

after the recommendation of the commander that became unnecessary.”

The commander could not restrain his saviour after all.

And as he came to their rescue at that point, it clearly showed them that Alam had no intention of supporting the demon king army.

“And to think that you would also bring in your private army. I surely thought it would just be the 120 guard troops.”

“That would have been too low to change the war situation, right? It would be unnatural for the demon king army to retreat because of it.”

Alam said while laughing, escorting me to the guest room.

“Also, it seems like they will tolerate the private army I had been hiding considering that event. They will agree that it is a necessary force for defence.”

“Glad to hear that.”

I do not quite know how the conversation went but it looked like Alam spoke quite passionately of his justice and morale.

The Miraldia army commander was also a passionate man so they hit it off very well.

He was completely agreeing with Alam on everything at the end, even going so far as to make promises and say ‘Shaldir does not have enough guards. I will negotiate with the higher-ups about it’.

In Alam’s case, it looks like he will be able to plot even better with his natural attitude rather than trying to use tricks.

Alam straightened his posture and faced me.

“I am immensely grateful to you for saving Shaldir from this crisis. If we look at the root of this problem, my poor diplomacy was the cause, so thank you very much.”

“You have a really straight-forward personality.”

It looked like he was trying really hard at first but Alam is not suited for this sort of acting. He is the type whose real intention can be seen easily.

And probably the type who can move people with his real personality rather

than by hiding anything.

"The demon king army holds sufficient military strength and also keeps promises. And above all, does not kill without reason. I hope you have understood that with this fight." I told Alam.

The enemy's heavy cavalry posed a threat so we had to thoroughly knock them out but, even still, the number of soldiers killed in war were only a few dozen.

There were many soldiers who fell off their horse or were rendered useless, therefore there was no need to kill needlessly in that situation.

Alam agreed strongly with what I had said.

"Yes. From now on, I will cooperate with the demon king army and appeal for the co-existence of the demons and humans not only to Shaldir, but also to different cities of the southern area."

I wonder if it will go that smooth.

"We of the southern region are the descendants of the colonists who had crossed the sea to settle here. We have not forgotten how it feels to be at a new place. Even if its co-existence with the demons, I am sure it will work out well."

Alam said confidently.

This guy... he is surely very passionate.

After taking our leave from Alam, we returned to Rune Height. With this, Rune Height has Bernhainen and Tuban at north and Shaldir at east as shields. The preparations for the south are not yet ready but the possibility of them attacking with a number equal to ours is quite low.

It looked like I could devote myself to domestic affairs and be at ease for a while.

But that very night, I was woken up.

"Commander, the leader of the Stillmoon faith is requesting for a meeting..."

The werewolf on duty had come to wake me up as I slept soundly.

"What do you want in the middle of the night....?"

I would have liked them to wait till the morning.

While I was thinking that, my subordinate said,

"I am told that it is about a premonition of a serious affair of the demon king army"

"Nn?"

The leader of Stillmoon faith, eh? I guess it is the astrologer Miti then.

I have not met her since the religious meeting but what does she mean by a serious affair of the demon king army?

She is an influencial person in Rune Height, so I decided I would meet her.

I tried to hold back my drowsiness as I escorted Miti to the office.

"I am sorry to bother you with this in the middle of the night but, the arrangement of the stars informed of the hero's appearance."

Ah, so it is about that.

"I am sorry to say this even though you came all the way to inform us but, if it is about the hero then, I have already defeated him. Although he was a fake..."

"No, this is not about 'Hero Renhalf'. It is about the real hero."

Miti informed me with a serious expression.

"Just moments before, a zodiac was brightly shining at north. I think it would be best if you send a messenger to affirm the situation."

I was hesitating on what to do but, I have heard quite a lot about her skills as an astrologer. She also seems to be famous in the southern area.

This world's astrology is a real premonition magic. The more skilled the astrologer, the more accurate it is.

As a magic user myself, I should listen to her opinion as a specialist.

"If it is making you say that much, I am sure it is nothing trivial. I understand; I will investigate it at once."

If I am not wrong, master should be staying at Bernhainen tonight.

I should despatch someone from the centaur troop and make master check up on the northern front line.

As this world does not have phones nor mails, it takes time to transmit information.

But even still, it is quite odd for a pious person to inform the demons about the appearance of the hero.

“But, Miti-dono, isn’t the hero supposed to be your ally?”

To which, Miti shook her head, and said smiling,

“I owe you for the religous meeting. And also..”

“Also?”

“Things are good for the Stillmoon faith in Rune Height as it is. I like the southern werewolf rather than the northern hero.”

That kinda made me happy.

“Thank you, Miti-dono. I will not forget this favour.”

After paying my respect to her, I immediately sent a messenger.

Chapter 59: Collapse of the 2nd division

The centaur messenger I had sent in the middle of the night was taking quite a long time to return.

Finally, at noon of the next day, the centaur returned.

"You took quite a while; Did something happen?"

As I asked the young centaur, he answered with a pale face, "It's terrible.... division leader Tiberit has..."

"What happened?"

"... has died in battle.."

Are you kidding me?

That titan who is even taller than castle walls, that veteran soldier?

"You're sure it is not some sort of a mistake?"

"It was reported by Gomoviroa-sama, therefore, the chances of it being so are really low....."

So master went and confirmed it herself.

"Wait, is the 3rd division leader all right?!"

"Ye-yes. She just returned this morning. She was all exhausted so aide Mereen has been nursing her."

It seems like something beyond my imagination had occurred.

According to master, it looked like the 2nd division was attacked while they were stationed in the agriculture city, Behhen.

Naturally, division leader Tiberit had confronted the enemy but then, a citizen soldier appeared.

And at the end of the intense battle, they had slayed division leader Tiberit.

She went on further saying, that it turned into a battlefield of hell.

The demons fight and follow a strong leader but, when that leader is

defeated, they fall into a state of panic. One would not comprehend this feeling if they are not a demon. That in itself just goes to show how much they are relying on the leader.

The reason why the demon king or I do not go to the front line is precisely because of this.

Having lost their leader in battle, the second division had started to panic.

For the Miraldia army, it probably seemed like a bonus round. They could not fight nearly as well without their leader.

And in the blink of an eye, the soldiers of the 2nd division were defeated.

However, master, who had come running into the battlefield, used fog magic to cover the whole area. It is of the same type which drifts outside the Glenstadt castle.

Master ordered the 2nd division to retreat and barely managed to avoid total annihilation. At that time, master had spotted a soldier, on whom the fog magic had no effect. Only around that one soldier, the fog was clearing up.

For master's magic to not work on someone, that person cannot be anyone other than the hero.

"Did anyone go to report to the demon king?"

"The 2nd division has started to retreat aiming towards the Glenstadt castle. I sent a messenger to Bernhainen just in case."

"Got it, thank you. Please rest for a while."

I immediately called all of the leading members. Airia and the leaders of all the squads.

This turned into a serious matter.

Now, when the 3rd division leader is in a lethargic state and the 2nd division leader has died in battle, the demon king army's command has been entrusted to the vice commanders of each division.

"Vaito-dono, let's return to Glenstadt at once."

Aide Bartz said with a calm tone but, one could feel his unexpressed strong

feeling of impatience.

“At the very least, permit us, the Blue Scale Knights’ Order, to return. We will protect the Demon king.”

However, I could not approve of it.

If our opponent is the hero, no matter how elite squad we send, it will be of no use.

Even if 500 of the Blue Scale Knights fight till annihilation, it would do as little as to tire the hero a bit.

The opponent is like the demon king of the human side. Right from the moment Tiberit division leader was defeated, our chances of winning were reduced to zero.

Tiberit division leader was strong enough to go up against all of the Blue Scale knights alone.

“Bartz-dono, I cannot give you permission for that. Every squad under my command will devote themselves to Rune Height’s defence.”

“But....”

“Against the hero, we cannot afford to exhaust anymore military strength. And also, the demons’ future is at stake in this town. If we neglect defending this town, we will surely get scolded by the demon king.”

“Airia-dono, I will temporarily entrust all right to command the squads under the demon king army to you. You, being a human, can surely deal with it calmly. Lash will command the skeleton soldiers.”

“I-I understand. Umm, what will you be doing, Vaito-dono?”

There will probably be opposing opinions if I say this but, I resolved myself and declared,

“As the representative of all you here, I will go to protect the demon king. I am a magician, therefore I can surely protect the demon king even without engaging in direct combat.”

As I finished saying, the room became silent. Technical officer Kurtz, aide

Bartz, the centaur troop leader, even Faan-onee-san looked at me in silence.

As expected, was it unfair?

Before long, Kurtz started talking.

"There does not... seem to be any other way. Even if anyone else returned, I doubt they would be of any use."

As Kartz said with a bitter expression, his little brother Bartz also agreed.

"Unfortunately, it is as brother just said. Vaito-dono can also use healing magic. If someone were to be beside the demon king, Vaito-dono would be the most reassuring."

"And also, Vaito is absurdly strong... Now, when the division leaders are not present, Vaito is the strongest..."

It seems like among them, I am considered as the strongest after the demon king and the division leaders.

They are probably overestimating my magic. I shall let it be like that for now. Forgive me.

At the end, Faan-onee-san gently said,

"I will look after the werewolf and inujin squad so you don't need to worry, okay? You must definitely not die, Vaito-kun."

"Yes, I will try my best."

After I entrusted everyone their jobs, I immediately started preparing for the journey.

It is already past noon and no recent news have been delivered.

It would probably take 2-3 days to reach Glenstadt castle on foot but if I transformed and kept running without rest, I could probably reach there by tomorrow. I can take detours through routes where humans or horses cannot cross.

I brought out the old leather cover magic book from my office drawer. It was the textbook I was using during my training.

As I went through the marked pages, I confirmed the spells written there once

again.

It would be nice if I do not have to use this.....

Chapter 60: The fallen, and the ones about to fall

There was a fog surrounding the Glenstadt castle which did not let the humans come close. I carefully walked closer to the castle.

Fortunately, it looked like the castle was still safe. The guards saw my face and immediately opened up the gate.

However, the moment I stepped inside the castle, I realized all over again that the 2nd division was annihilated.

There were demons and giants resting their body on the courtyard. Most of them were not injured.

At a glance, it looked like the damage was low but that was probably not the case.

Most likely, the ones who had been injured could not return alive.

Their decreased number and pensive expressions indicated that quite clearly.

As I was going through them, I asked about the situation.

In the 2nd division, the ones I feel most comfortable talking with are the small demons. They have a small build, so-so magical mana and somewhat good intellect. They are quite weak.

In other words, the goblins.

"I came rushing after I heard that Tiberit division leader had died in battle. Tell me the whole situation."

As I said that, they looked at each other and replied,

"Boss, died... Killed by one human. After that, a lot more human came. Killed many comrades."

"What was the human who killed the division leader like?"

"Normal human. He was a man. Wearing normal clothes, with a sword and shield."

I do not understand.

However, I did understand how they did not want to stand out like the fake hero.

"Is everyone here all that is left of the 2nd division?"

"I do not know. Holy mother used fog magic. Everyone got separated. Thanks to holy mother's helmet, I was able to come back."

When I looked at him carefully, I noticed he was wearing the helmet master had made. They called it the 'Spirit of the war dead helmet' in the 2nd division.

"Zuku, Gyobel, Gubuf.... and a lot other died. I could hear the voice of the dead. I ran towards it. And met red dragonoids. They saved me."

The Crimson Knights' Order of the 1st division, I see. So they were able to assist the retreat as planned.

As I watched over the situation in the courtyard, I noticed they were sitting as groups differentiated by their tribe. And among them, there were a few wearing that helmet.

It looks like the helmet master made helped them to escape through the fog.

But if I assume the ones in the courtyard to be everyone remaining, then the 2nd division can not function anymore.

Even the largest group of Yokai troop only had a few hundred remaining. If I am not wrong, they had close to two to three thousand members at the beginning of the war.

The giants or large-scale demons, who take retreat as an insult, were at an even tragic state. The giants only had a few members remaining so they also cannot work as a troop anymore.

Which reminds me, I did not see the beast tribe.

"Oi, where is the beast troop? You know, the one with Dogg. The self-proclaimed genius."

As I asked them, they looked down sadly and said,

"Dogg-sama, is not here anymore..."

"What did you say?"

"He said '*Protecting the weak is the responsibility of the strong*'. He fought with the humans. I couldn't see him in the fog. And then it became silent."

It seems like the goblins knew what happened afterwards.

They sat silently, among them there were a few who were sobbing.

I see. So he had that kind of a part to him as well....

It would be cruel to ask them further questions.

"I understand. The 1st division is protecting this place. Rest well."

"Thank you, Vaito-sama."

Looking at how disheartened they are, it would be impossible to expect them to participate in any more battles.

It would be better if I consider the whole 2nd division unable to fight when strategizing hereafter.

As I hurriedly entered the castle, a Crimson Scaled Knight came rushing toward me. It was Shure.

"Vaito-dono, thank you for coming."

"I am glad that you are safe, Shure-dono."

That is good, I should inform Aide Bartz later. It seemed like he was worrying quite a lot.

I asked her about the situation while walking.

It seems like the Miraldia army rushed into the castle gates of Behhen after Tiberit division leader was defeated by the hero.

The Behhen castle walls were repaired but as the 2nd division did not know anything about castle siege battles, their strategy was full of flaws.

Even if they tried holding the castle, the hero was already inside.

Everyone in the 2nd division did try to retreat with the help of the fog but, the unfortunate ones who had encountered the hero or the Miraldia army were annihilated.

"The fog had surrounded Behhen but there were a few troops who came

chasing the 2nd division. My squad exterminated them and escorted the remaining member of the 2nd division to Glenstadt.”

“Well done. If it weren’t for Shure-dono, the 2nd division might have been completely destroyed by now.”

When I praised her efforts, she shook her head and said with a regretting tone,

“No... I could do nothing but retreat with the 2nd division. Against the terrifying fighting spirit of hero’s army, we could not afford to stand and fight. If they advance onto here, we can not avoid having a hard fight.”

I do understand her concerns but, it is highly unlikely they will be able to pin down this location.

The Glenstadt castle is deep inside the forest. Unlike the time when the castle was under humans, no roads remain which lead here.

And on top of all that, there is the thick fog. Not only does this fog obstruct their vision, it also eats into human bodies. The effect was not as high in Behben but if the humans walk in this fog even for half a day, they will surely collapse.

The problem is the hero.

If it is the real hero, I doubt even master’s magic would have any kind of effect.

“I am a magician so I know that it will be difficult for the humans to be in this fog for a long period of time. The hero singlehandedly will be the threat.”

After I told her that, Aide Shure pondered for a while and agreed,

“I understand. I will have the Knights’ Order patrol the area in squads. I will order them to avoid battle completely.”

Maybe because she had gone through that battle and saw the 2nd division’s condition up close, she had become even more cautious.

Feeling relieved, I said to her,

“I understand. I shall lend a hand as well.”

After bidding Aide Shure farewell, I went to meet the demon king.

As always, the demon king was in the office, looking deep in thought.

“Vaito, you went to the trouble of coming here.”

“It’s a serious matter for the demon king, after all.”

“You should have just devoted yourself to Rune Height’s domestic affairs without needlessly worrying about me. Well, you did well coming here.”

The demon king said while wearing a bitter smile, offering me a chair.

I had worried the demon king would be depressed after Tiberit, one who has been member of the demon king army since it’s creation, died in battle. But it looks like the demon king is holding up.

“So Tiberit has also departed for the afterworld, eh..... He was once an outlaw, laying waste in the dragonoid’s territory.” the demon king said, staring at one point of the desk lost in thought.

“But when I went to subjugate him, he surrendered without even fighting. He looked like a man with a short temper but he could also catch onto the true nature of things.”

Ah, this is bad.

The demon king has indeed, taken quite some damage.

“With this, the only one remaining alive from the starting of the demon king army is Gomoviroa.. I must live for their part as well.”

“Yes, please guide the demon king army, for the ones who have departed, as well for the ones remaining.”

I encouraged the demon king, and continued,

“Even a hero could not possibly find Glenstadt castle that easily. Please, in this period, finish up the preparations.”

After staring at my face for a while, the demon king murmured,

“Not asking to strengthen the defence... that is very much like you.”

“After all, it would be useless no matter how many of us went up against him.”

The one called the demon king, is equal to the sun which appears above the land. There is no way a normal human can win.

And similarly, the hero as well, is a being of completely different nature than the normal human. It would have been a different matter if the hero was in the middle of his growth but, otherwise, normal demons cannot stand up against him.

Of course, I do not plan on fighting the hero head on. I will be able to buy some time but I will definitely get killed.

If that is the case then I might as well buy time in different way to help the demon king finish the preparations.

My job would probably be to provide medical treatment after the fight is over.

If both of them fought, surely the winning party would not be left unscathed.

Chapter 61: The Annihilator's Footsteps

For the past two days, I waited for the hero to appear at Glenstadt Castle. I'm worried about Rune Height as well, but I'm the only magician who can use healing magic in the castle.

I plan to change shifts with my master once he recovers, but by that time if the hero comes by I have no choice but to heal my master immediately.

Meanwhile, I received a strange report.

"In the past two days, someone killed a squad of three on patrol." Aide Shure carried a serious expression.

The x-mark on the map was slowly approaching Glenstadt Castle.

"I can only think that we are going to meet the hero soon." As I said that, Aide Shure nodded in agreement.

"I was given strict orders to avoid the battle and give top priority to the report, so it appears that those who could not escape have been killed."

It's just like a horror movie. If there is an encounter in the fog, the hero has a chance to ambush, which could be a big advantage for him.

"Vaito-dono's troops who participated each had four horses. Furthermore, having two horses in the front and two in the back, if either one was attacked, the troops were told to have one withdraw and report back. Even so..."

Listening to the sound of the cavalry behind the scenes, I could only think that those troops were not able to escape.

How dreadful.

"Vaito-dono also seems to have seen the dead bodies."

I saw them. I thought they might still be breathing, but they were definitely dead.

"Each of the cavalries were cut with a knife; it had a unique cut that shouldn't be mistaken for just any old sword."

"What do you think?"

There is a possibility that they used a large weapon, but I had no feeling of the "heaviness" like in the drawings of the axes and swords. For that reason, I believe he might have a razor.

Despite my disbelief, I answered in this way. "This is my guess as being the best magician of this time, but it seems to resemble the magical power of the hero."

"I see.... Then it looks like something that is impossible for us to deal with."

Withstanding Aide Shure's frustrated look, I prepare to tell her. "Seeing how badly the last squad was defeated, the hero is most likely already quite close to Glenstadt. Stopping the patrols would be dangerous."

"I agree. Let's avoid the battle and stay alert in the castle." Aide Shure said, and continued her talk.

"All the soldiers of the 2nd division were ordered to fall back an hour ago."

"Good idea. I know roughly where the hero is, so we won't have to encounter him and should be able to escape."

The 2nd division has no chance anymore. Because their chief was defeated, they no longer have the confidence nor courage to continue fighting. Moreover, they must be exhausted from the long fight.

Since the 2nd division dissolved, the only combatants in the castle are the dragonoids. Five hundred Crimson Scaled Knights vs. 3000 soldiers. Plus, there are 12 guards able to aide.

Each of their three aides were commanding 1000 soldiers at a time, but I consulted the Demon Lord, and forced them to retreat.

If my calculations are correct, it shouldn't matter whether they have 3000 or 30,000 soldiers.

It was the Crimson Scaled Knights who could make it until the end.

"Please let us take refuge momentarily outside the castle."

"We cannot do that. Do you not serve our Majesty?" Aide Shure asserted in a

dignified tone.

How troubling... it's hard to swallow, but despite how many Crimson Scaled Knights there are, they look like mere bundles of hay compared to the hero and his companions.

Even if I told Aide Shure, she most likely would not take back her words of refusing refuge.

Then came the Demon Lord cladded in armor, accompanied by his black scaled guards.

"Shure, it looks like you have been troubling Vaito." He talked to her with a soft voice, as if it were his own daughter.

Shure straightened her back, and spoke nervously. "N-no, I have been dutifully carrying out my orders as an a-aide!"

"I am enamored by your loyalty. However, I have been hearing differently, Shure." The Demon Lord bent down from his tall position, and gazed directly into Shure's eyes.

"According to Gomoviroa and Vaito, the hero is getting strong enough to match my level. If that is true, I will have to beat him using a carefully planned strategy. No matter how excellent you and your Crimson Scaled Knights are, are you certain you will be able to win?"

Of course. Even if our entire army was challenged, it would most likely be our Demon Lord's victory.

Destroying humanity in general is easy enough for the Demon Lord. Even though I don't really have the desire to do that.

Gently persuaded, Shure hung her head in shame. Then in a painful voice, she answered.

"I agree with you.... I...."

"Good, that's what I expect. I am proud of your loyalty and military prowess. Therefore, do not lose because of these petty trifles."

The Demon Lord called the hero's invasion petty.

I'm sure the Demon Lord knows it is not that easy, but he expects Shure to keep herself safe.

It looks like Shure finally understood.

"I am sorry for my inexcusable behavior. I will follow Vaito-dono's suggestions."

"Yes, I have Vaito and other guards as well. Them alone should be equivalent to ten thousand armies. You protect the survivors of the second division. Have them also return to the front again some time."

"Understood!"

Well, well, it looks like she's finally on track.

Shure looks happy; it's almost like she's a changed person. Is this the effect of the Demon Lord?

"Vaito-dono." Aide Shure turned towards my direction, and informed me in a serious tone.

"In place of my powerlessness, the power of the Demon Lord will keep you safe."

I really don't understand her honesty. Even if I'm a little lucky, there's still a good chance I could be killed in battle."

Which is why I answered, "With all my power."

Suddenly the inside of the castle became quiet, the eeriness of the deep forest creeping up in the night.

Hidden behind the fog, he appeared.

Chapter 62: Courtyard Tragedy

Only one figure emerged from the fog. He was lightly armoured.

"All the sentinels, retreat. No matter what happens, do not make a move unless I order to do so!"

I ordered the dragonoids remaining in the castle from the watchtower.

I made them open the castle gate.

A castle gate won't defend us from the enemy who cut down the Tiberet division leader. It will just get destroyed.

However, I do not quite like the idea of letting him just enter like that.

The person thought to be the hero, crossed through Glenstadt castle gate without any fear.

As he came closer, gradually his strength became clear. He doesn't even seem to be a magician but his magical power seems to be on a completely different level. And, just like the Demon Lord, it gushes out from the inside.

There is no mistaking it. He's the real hero.

The power the hero was releasing cleared the surrounding mist. The mist was clearing away only from around him. An overwhelming presence.

"Vaito-sama....."

The guards who gathered around me wore an anxious expression. They weren't the elite guards, just the normal ones.

But being experienced soldiers, they clearly understood the hero's overpowering presence.

I strictly order them,

"It is definitely the real hero. Even if we launched an attack on him altogether, we will probably get defeated. Do not make a move."

"Ye-yes, sir!"

The hero who had now come inside the courtyard, headed inside the castle

without any hesitation.

He was wearing normal clothes like the citizens of Miraldia and had only equipped a simple Miraldia guard breastplate on top. I don't know if he was from Bahhen or just equipped the armor from Bahhen but there was a Bahhen city symbol engraved on the armour.

Even at his waist, as expected, only a common soldier sword hanged. He was not even carrying any other bags.

It looked like he doesn't have any projectile weapons so we might as well try shooting some arrows at him.

It was at that moment.

"For Tiberit division leader!"

"We will protect the Demon Lord!"

From inside the castle, figures came out from all around and jumped at him. About a few dozen of them.

When I looked closer, it was the remaining of the 2nd division. So there were some left.

There seems to be a few new dragonoid recruits in there as well.

"Don't! Stop!"

I shouted at them but, they had already gone attacking the hero.

In the next moment, the hero drew his sword.

He cut a straight line with his cheap-looking sword.

But even before he drew the sword, I couldn't take my eyes off the hero's hands.

Magic circulated from his hands and it formed an invisible sword blade. And that too, absurdly long.

"Lie down!"

I shouted in panic but the only ones who were able to lie down after hearing that were the dragonoids.

Their backs were slightly grazed by the invisible magic blade.

We got to see what happened to the ones who were not able to duck right away.

All of them were cut into two.

Almost all the guards gathered in the courtyard were annihilated with just that one swing. Deep sword cuts were even engraved into the castle walls.

“Run! Run inside the castle!”

To my command, all the guards left alive started to withdraw inside the castle but, the hero did not let that happen.

With just a simple step forward, the hero had leaped over 10 meters ahead. By the time he had turned his back to the dragonoids, all of them were sprouting out blood and falling down.

None of them were able to escape.

After slaughtering everyone in the courtyard, the hero looked at his sword. Not being able to withstand the hero’s tremendous power, the cheap sword had snapped from its core.

He kicked the corpse of one of the dragonoids lying dead and took their blade. The swords dragonoids use were quite different from the human ones but, it seems like anything is fine as long as it is a sword for him. Probably because it was only a wick for him to clad magic with.

Then the hero looked up, and stared fixedly at me. The dragonoids around were faltering and stepping back.

I was also scared but I had the pride of an aide.

As if I will be beaten by a stare.

But if he gets closer, I will most definitely die.

Before long, he turned his back on me and went running into the castle.

I had expected this but, really, we can do nothing about something like this.

“I will return to the castle. You guys see if there are anyone alive in the courtyard and run.”

There probably weren't any survivors but, if I did not give them any order, they would probably end up doing something reckless.

After parting from the soldiers, I ran through the castle's passages. I hurried to the audience room.

But then, I noticed a figure coming from there.

It was the hero!

Worst of all, I had ended up encountering the hero in front of the audience room.

This guy, he came this far in the castle without even being puzzled. He's like a hound.

Concealing my fear, I glared at the hero. If I am going to die anyway, might as well not have an unsightly end as the aide of the 1st division.

But as soon as the hero spotted me, he stood still. He did not come attacking me.

"The Demon Lord is in there, right?"

He said with a cold voice. Even though he was a human, it felt like he had no kindness in him. Anger, hatred and murderous intent. Those were the only human-like feeling I got from him.

I had frozen in place in reaction to that inhuman-like aura, but it seemed like he was waiting for my response.

I have no choice, I shall boldly reply to him.

"Yes. Come if you wish, human."

I was afraid but I wasn't going to shout out 'hero'. The real hero, that is a being of the same level as the demon lord.

I opened the door and let the hero in.

When he was passing by me, I suddenly felt a dreadful killing intent. I felt as if the magic floating around him were only polished for offence.

I instantly took a step back and took stance.

But the hero was still there, standing up straight. Was he testing me?

Damn it, surprising me like that. I will have you hear my objections.

"Human, do you wish to fight with me?"

As I said that, the hero turned his back on me again and started walking again.

I would have been killed just now if I let my guard down.....

In the audience room, the elite guards were all equipped and standing in a line.

On the throne deep inside the room, the Demon Lord was sitting in his war attire. The room was filled with a frightening air of intimidation.

But the hero kept advancing forward, completely ignoring the elite guards.

He was probably tired of us underlings.

The hero struck the Demon Lord with his hatred-filled gaze.

"It's Ashes."

That was probably the hero's name. He didn't introduce himself as the hero.

The Demon Lord nodded, and replied in a calm tone,

"Friden Richter."

The Demon Lord, too, did not introduce herself as the demon lord.

The hero held his sword, aiming for the eye, and declared, "I have come to avenge Meltia."

He spoke of a person I had not known. It was not the name of a city. Probably a woman's name.

The Demon Lord sat in silence. She gazed at the hero quietly and then stood up.

The hero and the Demon Lord both did not say anything more than that. They probably don't plan on talking at this point.

The Demon Lord picked up the spear which was beside her. It was a small spear, which could be rotated in one's hand.

But it was a bit different in shape to the normal spears. Its tip wasn't straight, rather it was like a board, like a hunting gun or an old infantry gun.

The Demon Lord took a stance with the spear and gently said, "I shall listen to what you have to say with this."

In that moment, the hero leaped towards the Demon Lord.

Chapter 63: Death Battle and Demon Wolf

The battle between the demon lord and the hero was grand enough to be called a death battle.

The demon lord's spear flew towards the hero at an unbelievable speed. The overflowing magic in the spear was raging.

But the hero's sword did not fall behind even a step. His swordsmanship was like a silent storm, sweeping from side to side as he pleased, he stopped the spear's tip.

In the blink of an eye, the demon lord had lunged her spear towards the hero multiple times and all of them were blocked. Because of the intense shockwaves from the magic, the pillars behind got smashed to pieces.

I was dumbfounded as I watched that fight but suddenly realized a certain thing. The hero has been dexterously moving around for awhile, trying to drag in the guards to the fight.

The demon lord was trying to not hit the guards and restrain the hero from doing so either.

I hurriedly made the Black Scale guards fall back.

"Fall back! Don't be fooled by your eyes! Both of their weapons have extended range due to magic!"

Reacting to my words in no time, the guards leaped back. As expected of the elites the demon lord is proud of.

However, they are not magicians so they can't comprehend things which they can't see.

On the other hand, I was able to perceive their divinity, or rather their spiritual power as a flow of magic.

At a glance, their fight would look like a repetition of offense and defense.

However, they were actually fighting with all their strength to completely annihilate each other.

Just by getting grazed by the demon lord's speartip, the hero's magic was being stolen.

Conversely, just by a scratch from the hero's sword, a huge amount of magic leaked from the demon lord's body.

As their existences contravened each other, it looked like even the smallest scratch was able to inflict a deep injury.

If it was possible, I would have loved to assist in the fight but I would probably get cut down to pieces the moment I step in. And besides, the demon lord would not probably permit any sort of assistance either.

I would have also used support magic but that probably won't have any effect on the demon lord either. It is impossible to amplify the demon lord's power with my puny magic.

And so, while being aware of the surrounding, I watched over their battle with the guards.

It seemed they were equal in terms of strength. The spear lunged forward, which the sword brushed off and tried to attack, being blocked by the spear again and the flow repeated. It was a bewildering exchange of blows.

However, after lunging the spear forward, when the demon lord was pulling it back, there was a slight gap. Just for a moment, her handling of the spear grew slack.

I immediately understood what had happened.

It was something the demon lord had talked about long ago, the cross of the reincarnated.

The demon lord and I reincarnated into a demon from a human but the constitution and feeling of a human and a demon is different.

I did not know martial arts in my previous life so now when I know werewolf martial arts, I do not feel any inconvenience.

But the spear technique the demon lord was using now was probably something she learned in her previous life. It was completely different from the dragonoids.

However, that is only the humans' technique. There are a ton of differences between humans and dragonoids.

And so, if one were to forcibly use such a technique, they might end up hurting themself.

Actually, the demon lord's strongest forte is the sword. But as she would end up hurting her shoulder or wrist if the fight draws on, after testing various things, she decided on the spear.

The demon lord's handling of the spear was as sharp as ever. I don't think it has gotten dull.

However, in a fight between two beings who have transcended the normal realm, that gap was fatal.

"Die!"

The hero succeeded in striking the demon lord.

The demon lord did try to dodge it but was a moment too late.

The hero diagonally sliced the demon lord from shoulder to the waist.

In front of my eyes, I could clearly see the demon lord's magic leave her body.

This can't be.

The demon lord can't lose.

But the fresh blood scattering everywhere was unmistakably real.

"Splendid...."

As the demon lord said that, she fell to her knees.

On the other hand, now when I look closely, the hero had also received a deep wound. The spear had pierced the hero's stomach.

The demon lord had used all her might to land a counter. But it seems like it was too shallow to defeat the hero.

The wounded hero gripped his sword again and leapt towards the demon lord.

I also tried to go between them but was too late.

The demon lord's body fell to the ground and did not move.

The hero threw the broken sword and wiped off the blood on him with his shirt. He did not seem to be affected a bit.

And as if he had lost interest on the demon lord, he turned to face towards us.

"Don't think you can run away. You guys are next."

Looks like the hero-sama does not plan on letting us small fries escape either. He plans on killing every single demon he meets.

All the guards drew their sword at once but I signed them to stay back. It was futile.

"Stay back. I will deal with him."

The hero looked at me.

"You, you look like a human but you are a demon, aren't you? What is with that?"

Instead of replying, I transformed.

And howled at the top of my lungs. The soul shaker.

The chandelier broke down and the candle light scattered away, shrouding the surrounding in darkness.

Only the moonlight illuminated the place.

"Don't think you can leave this place alive."

I ended up saying something too pompous.

But I don't regret it. No matter what happens to the demon lord army, I absolutely can't let this guy live.

"Looks like you think you can win because I am wounded, huh?"

He placed a hand on his wounds and they disappeared without a trace.

Seeing that, even the experienced guards trembled a little.

Then he took a knife and gripped it with his underhand.

"What happened? Come at me."

I am being quite underestimated, huh?

Certainly, he just healed his wounds just now.

But that's just on the surface. When he took the blow and also when he healed it, he lost a lot of magic.

Now, this guy isn't the super-being he was before he fought the demon lord. The unlimited magic I felt overflowing from him before had also weakened. He probably can't heal up like that anymore.

If the hero is wounded like this, even if it's a little, I have a chance at winning.

However, I need to be resolved for that as well.

I released all the magic I had prepared, increasing my physical strength at once. I was drawing in the magic from the surrounding with soul shaker, so its effect was much stronger than usual.

Moreover, I decided on using the secret strengthening magic.

"Burn, my body! Turn the sleeping insanity into strength!"

It was one of the incantations, 'fanatic burn'.

It is only temporary but with this, I am able to cross the limits of my body. It is a magic which keeps on giving me strength, without caring the least about breaking my bones or tearing my flesh apart.

After using it, I might die off the recoil but I will be killed either way if I do not win here.

The moment he realized I used magic, he came at me with full strength. The tip of the knife came straight at me.

My strengthened eyesight could barely catch his movements. It was pretty much up to my instincts to dodge.

Dodging the knife, I drilled in a kick to hit stomach. I certainly felt it hit him but looked like it didn't affect him much.

But it made a hole in his breastplate and sent it flying.

"You!"

I barely dodged his knife again. I do not have as much magic or stamina as the demon lord. If it hit, that would probably be the end.

As payback, I socked him on the face. It was a clean hit but it looked like it didn't affect him much either.

What a person. It's a werewolf's punch which can instantly kill a bear or a war horse, you know?!

Close combat makes my vision narrow and is risky for me. Taking some distance, I calmed down to think.

Calm down. I am a werewolf.

Werewolves are not proud warriors. They are cruel hunters.

This fight too, is not one of a proud and honorable soldier. It is a fight out of anger, to use any foul move to hunt the hero down.

And so, I hid myself behind a pillar.

"What? You scared now?!"

The hero chopped off the pillar with his knife. Multiple times at that too. The huge pillar got chopped up as if it was a candle and slid down.

As I expected.

He only attacks. He is a daredevil who doesn't know when to back off.

I kicked some of the debris towards him.

And immediately after, I got on all four like a real werewolf and ran on the floor.

Black floor, black walls, black pillars, black ceiling, black stones, and, a black werewolf.

For just a moment. For just a moment, which would not even be tenths of a second, he couldn't sense me.

He was bewildered to find me blending in with the stones.

That one moment was enough.

Putting my life on the line, I bit his leg with my fangs.

Without hesitating, I crunched down his shin.

“Ugguu?!”

With the sound of bones breaking, I could smell a human’s blood.

A werewolf’s real weapon is not it’s claws or fists. It’s the fang.

Everything except the fang are nothing except countermeasures to block the enemy.

I do not know how a human fights but I fully understood how a werewolf fought.

Other attacks might not deal damage, but an attack with the fangs would even inflict a deep wound on the hero.

And if so, I still have a chance to win.

Chapter 64: Blood-Stained Fangs

Injured or not, Heroes remained heroes.

“Guoooooh!”

The Hero roared as he approached, his knife ready to swing downwards. There was barely a sliver of the Hero’s magic left. I narrowly avoided the swing, its movement already dulled by his pain. I brushed off his hand and pushed him down to the black floor.

Seeing that we’d come this far, it was fair to assume that we were evenly matched. Both the Hero and I were risking our very lives in this battle. It was now merely a question of who would strike first; whether I would dig my fangs into his windpipe, or whether he would use that knife to stab me in the neck before I had the chance to do so.

The well of physical strength the Hero held was just barely greater than my own, but he did nothing to hold me down. Was he being vigilant, wary of the surrounding personal guards? The Hero had purposefully forgone slaying the guards, instead opting to use them as a means to hinder the Demon Lord’s movement. Now, however, the very same guards had become the shackles that bound him.

While the conditions were optimal and could be nothing but advantageous, I had finally come this far and was now finally standing on even ground. Apart from the single lunge with the fangs that boasted the acme of my might, there was nothing I could do that would connect to the Hero.

On the other hand a single punch, a single kick from the Hero would be more than sufficient to deal immense damage to me. If my focus wavered for even a single moment, I would be knocked out and this would all be settled.

But there was no way I could stand the thought of losing. A big Hero, so what? I would never accept someone like him. I feigned a lunge, my fangs aiming for the Hero’s throat, then sunk them into the wrist of his right hand instead as he attempted to defend himself.

My teeth chomped down on the joints of his wrist. His right hand was useless now.

At that very moment, his left fist slams into me with all of his strength behind it.

His strength was equal to a giant's. For a moment, I could feel my consciousness starting to dim.

Coming back to my senses with sharp breath of air, the first thing I noticed was that the Hero was pinning me down. Lost in his own rage, his face had contorted into a grimace.

"You bastard!"

That wasn't good.

He had pulled his left fist backward, as far as it would go. If I were to be on the receiving end of a punch with that much force behind it, there was no doubt that it would all be over.

The Hero had grabbed me in a mounting position. I couldn't move a muscle, almost as if I was being pinned beneath a slab of rock. The guards around me were readying their spears, but it was clear that they couldn't make it in time.

Was this it?

While I had long since prepared myself for the eventuality of death, my vain struggle pushed me to cast sorcery to counter him.

I was utterly incapable of using any sort of attack spells. Unlike the others, the only forms of magic available to me were those that reinforced and healed the body.

So I used them.

I somehow managed to cast my spell a split second before his fist came flying.

It was a healing spell borne of my desperate struggles. One that had been stripped down to its bare, rudimentary elements.

"Guoooooooooh?!"

The Hero let loose an anguished scream, unlike anything he had let out

before. In pure agony, he alternated between cradling his right wrist and then his shin.

For a mere moment, all of his movements ceased.

The magic I had cast was of a sort that amplified one's naturally-given regenerative properties, a kind of sorcery that gradually healed wounds. It was the same magic that my master had used on that dog, the head commander of the Hell Beasts. It could be utilised with barely any amount of magic, but until the wound had fully healed it would accelerate the process of cell division to an abnormal degree, causing the wounded area to become incredibly painful.

It wasn't a spell meant for practical use, and was instead regarded as nothing more than magic required to move on to the next stage.

The pulpy mess of a wound, courtesy of the fangs of a proper werewolf, coupled with this unnatural healing process was sure to bring about a pain of unimaginable magnitude. Any normal man would have fainted in a heartbeat.

The virtue of being a Hero was enough to keep him from losing consciousness, but it seemed that even he couldn't bear to endure the sheer pain.

Giving my thanks to my master, I used this moment to my advantage.

I pushed the Hero's body to the side, then weighed him down and pinned him to the floor. This was the one moment that gave me even the slightest chance of victory.

I was going to end him.

I bit down on his windpipe. I let my werewolf fangs dig into his neck, then ripped out more than half of it. Blood gushed from the wound and sprayed about, clouding my vision in pure red.

I didn't even hear a scream.

I barely managed to prop myself up, almost smothered by the stench of the spouting geysers of blood. My breath was entwined with the metallic scent of blood.

I wiped my face clean and was greeted with the sight of the Hero as he

wriggled in an ocean of blood.

The most horrifying thing to see was that he was still attempting to rise to his feet. But as it so was with the loss of these large quantities of blood, his movements became duller by the minute. Needless to say, the healing magic I had cast earlier was no longer enough to be of use to him.

Drowning in the massive sea of his own blood, the hero was close to drawing his final breath.

His eyes were forced wide open by his own fear and shock as they regarded me. He heaved, blood escaping from between his lips. They moved as if he had something to say to me. His left hand shook as it rose, the tip of his finger pointing towards me.

I wondered what he was trying to say. I had no idea myself.

That was when I remembered that I had yet to introduce myself to him.

"My name is Vaito. A simple aide."

I had no idea if my words had reached him. The man's hand dropped and sunk into the puddle of blood, and the light in his eyes vanished. These were the final moments of the Hero Arshes.

Having survived this ordeal, I stood there with the guards, basking in a while of silence. I staggered and leaned against the crumbling stone pillar.

Now fatigued, I was unable to further maintain my form as a werewolf. I found myself returning to my original human form against my own will. That was the first time it had ever happened to me.

My field of visions grew more and more narrow, then started to turn dark. I was starting to feel the recoil from the Fanatic Burn.

Still staggering, I made my way to the fallen Demon Lord. My body felt heavy. It was as if I was pulling along weights of pure stone.

His Majesty didn't move. From what I could see from her magic, the light of his life had been completely snuffed out. No matter how skilled a sorcerer there was, it was impossible to treat him now.

I had wanted to at least be able to offer him some parting words.

But fact of the matter was that even I didn't know what would happen to me now. I could feel my entire body shrieking in pain, an after-effect of the excessive boosts brought about by magic.

In the end, the words I offered the Demon Lord were in Japanese.

"I've avenged you, my Lord."

Demons no longer needed to fear the Hero. So I could only ask that they rest easy now.

My surroundings went dark. This was the first time since my transformation into a werewolf, whose eyes could pierce through the blackest darkness, that I truly found myself in the embrace of the shadows.

My surroundings were plunged into a world of dark.

If I died here and now, would I be able to meet the Demon Lord?

Those were my last thoughts...

...before my consciousness ceased to be.

Chapter 65: Of the Demon Lord's Mausoleum and the Man That Gnawed a Hero to Death

By the time I finally opened my eyes, several days had passed by.

“Oh, you’re awake.”

I was greeted with the sight of Melehn peering directly into my face. She brought her own closer and pressed her forehead against my head, then proceeded to hum thoughtfully.

“Doesn’t look like there’s a problem with your magic. Spirit waves are fine too. Can’t spot any after-effects either.”

“Sorry, but... where is this...?”

Had I given it more thought, then I wouldn’t have posed the question. I was, of course, still inside Glenstadt Castle, resting in my own room.

“So I made it, huh? I didn’t die...”

I let out a long sigh. I was more than certain that, had I kicked the bucket then and there, I would have gotten an earful of the Demon Lord’s scoldings once I made it to the other side.

Melehn responded by giving me a rather chilling look.

“So tell me, is it just in a werewolf’s nature to overdo it like that? Or is it just you, Vaito?”

Ow, Ow! That hurts! That really hurts! Stop grinding my temples, Senpai!

“Um... How did things turn out?”

I managed to bring myself to avoid Melehn’s relentless assaults and had opted to ask the question that rested heavily on my mind.

In a rather surprising gesture, she let her hand fall onto my shoulder and gave her answer in an unexpectedly soft tone.

“Everything’s fine. There’s nothing for you to worry about. The Master took care of it all.”

She went on to tell me that the guards had personally nursed me after I had lost consciousness. They had also gone through the trouble of calling for the Dragon Folk to return from their refuge, then gotten to work on enshrining the remains of the Demon Lord and the Hero.

In a more convenient turn of events, the Master had come to relieve me of my unconsciousness soon after.

To shed a more light on that, it seemed that she had been perceptive enough to feel the loss of the two titanic entities that were made up of the Hero and the Demon Lord. She had even forced herself to come here in spite of her lingering troubles with movement.

I was also told that upon her arrival, the Master had gone on to toil away. She had spent the entire night at the Demon Lord's side doing everything within her power, but it was far too late for any forms of healing or resurrection to have any effect. It didn't matter whether you were the Lord of all Demons or a Hero; once you were subjected to the full extent of death, there was nothing that could bring you back.

In the end, the exhausted Master had been forced to officially declare the Demon King as deceased. She had done so through rivers of her own tears.

The Demon Lord's remains had been carried way to the mausoleum, where he had been buried in the graveyard beneath.

Demons did not have much in the way of customs that included a proper funeral service. Their life-long experience of dwelling alongside nature had taught them to bury their dead as quickly as possible, or there would be no way to protect their remains.

Nevertheless, there was no doubt that they would go into mourning.

The Hero's body, on the other hand, had been returned to the Miraldia Army that had been awaiting him outside the mist. The Master had done so believing that all those dead should be mourned equally, but it would seem that she had been met with the unbelievable shock of the army.

It was no wonder. After all, the most lethal wound visible on his corpse appeared to have been made by some king of gargantuan wolf.

They misinterpreted the situation, believing that the Hero had failed to subjugate the Demon Lord and had instead been gnawed to death by one of his underlings. Believing the Demon Lord to be alive and well, they neglected the body of their Hero and fled for the hills.

This being a fate no one deserved, the Hero had been brought to the mausoleum of Glenstadt Castle for a temporary burial. Some day, his remains would be returned to his home town.

A scout's report had come in, confirming that the Miraldia Army had succeeded in escaping the forest and was now back in Bachen. The public militia had scattered completely, and whatever remained of the official army had holed itself up in Bachen under the pretence of a defensive manoeuvre.

Other stories that were passed on to me told of horrific rumours that were circulating about. Rumours of me, mostly. I also heard that there were additions being made to the wanted posters published by the senate.

In the end, neither side had really gained anything. Both sides had lost their paragons.

The Miraldia Army should be silent for the time being, at least.

The real problems had festered in the Demon Lord's Army.

With the Demon Lord defeated, only the division commander was left to command the troops. With Division Commander Tiberit having perished in battle, the only one left was my own commander, Gomoviloa. She had been making use of the past few days to console and encourage her men, sometimes even scolding them; all responsibilities that had fallen to her. Had she not been there while I was out cold, there could be no imagining what might have happened to the distressed troops.

Considering her skill and prior accomplishments, the Master was a very suitable fit for the position of the new Demon Lord. She herself seemed to be hesitant to pick up that mantle, but I'd do my best to convince her later.

And in any case, it had been thanks to the instigations of the Master that the Demon Lord had even raised his army. Until she had done so, the only forces worth speaking of were the relatively minuscule forces of armed Dragon Folk.

That had then changed to include the likes of the great giant Tiberit and the countless demons that had decided to join their ranks. I myself was one of those who had been pushed upward by the Master to join the army.

That's why I'd make sure that the Master would shoulder the responsibility for it all. That I would aid her every step of the way went without saying.

While the army was one point of concern, what weighed the most heavily on my mind was the Demon Lord's mausoleum. I wanted to bid him farewell. On my own terms.

I rose from my bed. I could feel my body creaking at every joint, but I was still perfectly capable of movement.

"I'm going to His Majesty's mausoleum."

"I'll come with you."

"No, don't. I'd rather do this alone, if you don't mind."

Melehn gave me a long look of great concern, but then offered me a defeated smile.

"... I understand. Don't push yourself, alright?"

She lent me her shoulder to lean on, then ruffled my head like she used to do long ago. It brought back a lot of memories.

It just went to show that I'd beleaguered her far too much while I was unconscious, namely by making her worry her head off.

The minute I ventured out into the hallway, I was surprised to see all the aides of the first division forming a row in front of me. There was no way of telling when they had come here, but they were accompanied by the likes of the aide Balsche. Even Kulsche, the technical officer, was there. So were the personal guards.

Once I entered their field of vision, they all felt content to greet me with a silent salute. The thoughts that ran through my head couldn't be expressed with mere words, so I returned the gesture and gave them my own quiet salute.

Then, I left.

In the great park that was behind the castle Glenstadt, there was a mausoleum built out of stone. Those that had formerly resided in the castle must have planned to make use of it at some point, but they had never been able to make it inside. They had been overthrown by their own ilk, dragged down to ruin by other humans.

And now, it served as the resting place for the Demon Lord himself.

Once I had made an offering of incense, I looked up at the gloomy stone structure. This world had no actual incense, so I had been forced to make due and borrowed something with a similar enough scent from Melehn.

I closed my eyes, folded my hands together, and spoke to the Demon Lord.

“Your Majesty... Dying on your own was hardly fair.”

I had been reincarnated into this world as a werewolf, and had finally come across someone who had undergone a similar experience. It had even been someone from Japan, just like me.

There were no words to describe the familiarity I had felt towards him.

He had rarely ever spoken of his time in our old world, but he was still Japanese. Like I was.

There were too few things we had spoken of.

“You Majesty... I don’t mind the bread this world has to offer, but I’d like to eat some rice again. Don’t you agree?”

“Indeed. Rice could make use of the same amount of land and feed even more mouths. I’d love to introduce the people here to the idea of rice cultivation. Some day.”

“No, no. I’m just saying that I want to eat some for myself...”

“It’s much easier for you to eat grains, you know. Being a werewolf and all. But I’m part of the Dragon Folk. Our bodies just don’t handle the stuff well.”

“That sounds harsh...”

We had many conversations like that. While the Demon Lord had passed away without ever telling me what kind of person he was in his previous life, it

wasn't hard for me to visualise him as some kind of workaholic.

Even in this world, he had put his life on the line for his work. Now, he was dead.

The more I thought about it, the more socially awkward he seemed. He had, after all, died without even giving me his old name.

A voice behind me called my name.

"I thought I might find you here, Vaito."

It was the Master's voice. I turned around and was greeted with her usual smile.

She still seemed to be awfully tired. She was leaning on her staff in an almost dependant manner. Even the hue of her face seemed to be off.

"Master, are you feeling alright?"

"Oh, there's no need for you to worry. Let's focus on what's important here: you managed to defeat the enemies of the Demon Lord and Tiberit. Thank you, Vaito."

"The only thing I did was to take on a wounded Hero and kill him. It's really nothing worth the praise."

The Hero, Arshes. He had only fought against the enemies of the one called Meltia... and died for the same person. Or possible person.

Had Meltia been part of his family? A lover, perhaps? It was also possible that the two shared the same relationship a master and student might have.

It was possible that he was another person that had been reincarnated here?

Now, all of that would remain a mystery.

The Master held out a single, sealed letter.

"This is the Demon Lord's last will and testament. It said to hand it over to you."

"To me...?"

"I can't say I received a single one of these myself. Once you're done with it,

come and meet me in my room."

With those final words, Master turned to face the mausoleum and bowed her head in silence.

Chapter 66: Demon Lord Friden Richet's last will and testament

'Vaito.

If you are reading this letter, it means that I have been defeated by the hero.

At the same, it would mean you have defeated the hero too. I don't really think the hero would reconcile with you guys, after all.

But I do somewhat feel that you might be able to beat the hero.

And so, I shall leave this letter behind.

First of all, about the business of inheritance, all the knowledge I had gained in the previous world have been recorded in Japanese. There are about 4 red-spined books in the right table at the office. I want you to translate and pass the parts you deem worth passing to the technical officers.

Also, about my successor, if no one has any complaint, I would like it to be Gomoviroa. She has a great track record and strength to back that up as well.

I did think about recommending you as the successor but was rejected.

However, I do understand your feelings — on why you firmly declined.

You probably properly understand the weight of the responsibilities of someone who becomes king. There are times when a casual word uttered by the king can sow seeds of fear, mistrust or discord in the surrounding.

There will also be people who would want to use the king's power.

And so, the king must always be careful.

Well, I do not quite have confidence in whether I was careful or not.

Moreover, kings must pass down heartless orders sometimes as well.

There are times when one must kill their enemy's whole clan and there are also times when they must execute the soldiers who have surrendered. Just as the daimyo in the warring states period were once.

But, I do understand that you may not be able to do such things.

And as such, I won't ask you to be the demon lord.

Being kind to your opponents—that's your weak point but at the same time, it is also your strong point. In this world, that kind of peaceful outlook is very rare.

However, I believe that with that outlook, you can change the world.

It might be best for you to keep changing the world as you see fit, as an agile aide.

By the way, there's one thing I must apologize to you about.

Before, I had said that I won't raise any topic of the previous world. That I won't ask who you are.

However, I had presumed who you were, though it may be vague.

You have probably come from decades — no, centuries after the world I was in before. It seemed like you lived in a world rich of materials and technology.

By your leadership and outlook, many have learned a lot, including me. I am grateful. You are probably not aware of it yourself, though.

When I think about it like that, I come to the conclusion that you have probably lived in much more peaceful times than I did. From your speech and conduct, I feel the presence of a peaceful era.

And so that means, the stuff I have accomplished in the previous world with my whole life on the line might have beared fruit in some way.

Sorry for assuming a lot.

I can't stop thinking once I start, you see.

But because of that, I was able to live with my all and without any grief in this world.

Well, I am not dead at this point of writing, though.

I don't plan on losing to someone like the hero. I am the king of demons. The mediator of peace, Friden Richter.

I don't have any sorrow now. I can brag that I have conquered both my

previous world and this world.

The demon lord army is also slowly gaining more area. I have brought up many talented people. I am also not worried about my successor.

Now that it has come to this, life and death just seem like a trivial matter to me.

This is a good opportunity, I guess I will go all out to my heart's content in a long time.

But even still, since I have gone to all the trouble of writing this, it might be quite interesting to still hand it over to you after the fight with the hero.

I am pretty curious to know what kind of face you make at that moment.'

Chapter 67: Everyone's determination

After reading the Demon Lord's letter, I just blankly stared at the mausoleum.

Despite being so full of confidence, you lost, didn't you, Demon Lord? Even though everyone is so depressed, it is not fair for the person dying to be happy, don't you think? Is it possible that you are reincarnating somewhere right now? Could that be somewhere in this world? If that's so, we will all go searching for you, you know?

But there was no answer.

Putting away the letter in my pocket, I scrubbed my eyes clean. I took a deep breath and lowered my head to the mausoleum. Just as the Demon Lord was the Demon Lord for an entire life, I shall be the aide for my whole life as well. Looks like I have forever lost the chance to stop being an aide. Demon Lord, leave the rest to us. This aide shall do something about it.

After returning inside the castle, I decided to start solving problems one by one.

"Master, hurry up and become the Demon Lord."

"Don't be ridiculous."

The great sage Gomoviroa was rolling about on her bed like a child.

"I am not worthy of a king's vessel, you know? I'm just a researcher—and a human at that! Not happening, nope, nope!"

"Please stop acting like a child. Do you want the Demon Lord army to collapse? A lot of humans have also been affected so we can't go back anymore."

Master hugged the pillow and pouted.

"If you're saying that much, why don't you just become the Demon Lord?"

"Me?!"

"The one who defeated the true hero. You are also the person who brought up the demon city, Ryunheight. Nobody would oppose."

"If you're going to bring that up then, master, you are the oldest member — you have been here since the demon army was brought up. You're also the strongest magic user."

But master was determined to not admit it.

"I was sleeping at the most important moment! This would just look like an usurpation."

"No one would think that. And I was also sleeping at the important moments."

Despite all my efforts to convince master, she just kept shaking her head horizontally.

"I-do-not-wannaaaa!"

"Are you a kid?!"

"I am not even good at going out in front of humans. I would have to go in front of them then, right? Demons are still better but I can't go in front of humans. There is no way I can become the Demon Lord."

How troubling. Master being this shy.

But I have known her for quite a while so I kinda understand.

I think master is probably trying to depend on me.

Having lost everything with her sworn friend, everyone is now expecting her to be the next Demon Lord and flourish.

Master is the strongest magician, an expert researcher and a very passionate educator but she is neither a politician nor a soldier. If I had to say, I would say she is not suited for it.

And so, by talking to me like this, she is probably trying to steel her resolve.

I felt like that so I decided to accompany her willfulness to the end.

"If that's so, there is one good way, master."

"What is it?"

I took out the magician's training puppet from master's closet.

"Let's make this dude the Demon Lord."

"...What?"

After listening to my explanation, master nodded with a 'hmmm'.

"I see. So you're telling me to use the doll just when I appear in front of the humans, right?"

"Yes. With this, you could make it as nice as you want and wouldn't have to worry about assassinations either. You could just hide from the view and give your speech with a script or something."

It was a pattern I had seen several times in mangas in my previous life.

The one sitting on the throne would just be a doll and the real Demon Lord would be its close aide, standing beside it.

Yep, this is it.

It looked like master was thinking a bit about it too.

"I see, I see. I am scared of humans but if I can hide from view then it is possible."

"Right?"

She thought for a while after too but then gave a big nod.

Seems like she has steeled herself while we were having this absurd

conversation.

"I can't let the army the Demon Lord spent her life for fall just because of my selfishness. I will do it with my life on the line."

"Now that's my honorable master!"

She came close to me and grabbed my hand with her small hands.

"But, I will feel uneasy alone. Starting with you, I would have to rely on my disciples too. Alright?"

"Of course, master. Let's fulfill the Demon Lord's will."

"Hmm, let's do that."

She said with a smile.

And so the new Demon Lord, Gomoviroa was born.

This was very easily accepted by the whole Demon Lord army.

The previous Demon Lord had also always spoken about their successor.

And because of that, everyone in the Demon Lord army had always thought that if something were to happen to the Demon Lord, someone would succeed the throne.

Master is the oldest member, who was also present when the army was first being formed. And although she can only go all-out for a short period of time, for the time she has her mana, she is practically unrivaled.

The third division leaders were master's disciples so they had no objection with their respectable master being the Demon Lord.

And also, the second division had also been saved twice now by master at the north battlefield. Thanks to which she is being treated as a saint by them. It seems they wouldn't have any problem with it either.

The first division also agreed to master being the one succeeding the Demon Lord. They are respecting the Demon Lord's dying wish. Moreover, most of the members of the first division have been here for quite a while so they have a good bond with master.

Thanks to that, collecting everyone's opinion was surprisingly simple.

And this is how the Demon Lord army would be guided by the new Demon Lord, Gomoviroa. The memorial of the previous king and the enthronement of the new one was scheduled to be done in a few days.

However, because master would inherit the title of the Demon Lord, the spot of the third division's leader was vacant.

"Who will fill in?"

"You should be the one."

"No, no, I am the aide of the first division. And besides, I am also your direct aide, you know, master?"

If I were to become the squad leader, I would have too much to do in my hands which I probably wouldn't be able to handle.

We looked at each other and said,

"Then, let's ask Merayne-senpai."

"Then it's settled."

If it's Merayne-senpai, the other disciples would also oblige.

I stayed in the first division and became the direct aide to the Demon Lord. When I think about diplomacy, this way is easier.

Merayne-senpai came complaining later but since it was the new Demon

Lord's imperial command, I ignored her.

"Oi Vaito, why is the person who defeated the true hero himself still just an aide?! Become the squad leader!"

"Ehh, I don't wanna be your superior officer, Mereen-senpai."

As I refused, she turned to face Fernel.

"Geez! Vaito, you are not cute anymore! It's fine, I will make Fer do it."

"It is even more impossible for me!! My experience as both master's disciple and the Demon Lord army's general is too shallow!"

Please give up and take on the role of the squad leader, queen of vampires.

Even with the pain still lingering in our hearts, we determined ourselves and decided to move forward and keep fighting by inheriting the Demon Lord's will.

We will build a country where demons can live with humans.

We will still be chasing after the dream Demon Lord Fredenrichter drew.

But before that, I was requested to help master with something little.

I wonder what it is...

Chapter 68: Gomoviroa's Recollections

What are Demon Lords?

Throughout the ages, those that were called Demon Lords were recognized for their apparent disparity in strength.

Some would only pursue their own strength, some were intoxicated by plunder and destruction, some tried to destroy the humans and some strived for coexistence with humans.

Looking at these diverse lives, it would seem that the endgame of those that gain power is not always the same.

On the other hand, heroes are also full of mysteries.

In the past, whenever a Demon Lord started to invade a human territory, Heroes would make an appearance before you knew it.

During peacetimes, do these Heroes just reside in the midst of the public, or do they appear as a response to a Demon Lords arrival; I do not know the answer to this either.

There are many mysterious aspects of our current Hero as well.

As a Hero to the humans, his equipment and actions were bizarre. The simplistic weapon, his act of going straight away to challenge the Demon Lord.

I have heard that his purpose was not the protection of mankind, but simply vengeance.

Demon Lords and Heroes work to counteract each other. Like hot and cold water.

By opposing each other, one will be annihilated and the other too will eventually disappear into the shadows of history. Much like after the combining of hot and cold water, what is left is just tepid water.

Perhaps this is the law of the universe to maintain a state of equilibrium.

Or perhaps Demon Lords and Heroes have a relationship like that of a mound of dirt and a hole.

If one were to dig into the flat ground, a mound of dirt would be made right next to it. The mound is the Demon Lord and the hole is the Hero.

If one were to throw the dirt back into the hole; we return to a flat surface, and in other words, return to a state of equilibrium.

In any case, we have received a tremendous blow by this attack from the Hero.

Friedenrichter, old Tiberito too, they have all left in succession.

Alas, there is no one but I, who can be the successor to the Demon Lord's seat.

No, accurately there is someone.

However, I do not think that he will ever accept the mantle of Demon Lord.

I know, as I've observed him for a long time since his childhood. Seen as a leader of monsters, he is soft; to put it harshly and moderate; to put it kindly.

He will surely struggle endlessly with that personality.

As his tutor, forcing my will on my own student is not an option.

I myself may have a rather suspicious track record, but I'm also a veteran. That shouldn't be a problem.

Fortunately, there are no opposing forces within the Demon Lord's Army.

The only problem is whether I possess capabilities fitting of a Demon Lord.

As an organism, I am no more than a young human girl. Even more, I am half dead.

The power of magic is just barely allowing me to survive.

However, I do not think I will be able to bear the taxing work ahead in this state.

It will then become necessary to knock on ‘The Last Door’ that is Necromancy.

Friedenrichter had banned the use of ‘The Last Door’ for the reason of it being too dangerous.

He is not a Sorcerer, but he has a deep understanding of the human heart. It is difficult for the human heart to endure ‘The Last Door’. He would constantly say.

I often wondered from back then; how he was able to understand the human heart to that degree?

A Demon Lord is not all-knowing and all-mighty. One look at the actions of the Demon Lords of the past makes this very apparent.

Then there must be some kind of reason.

I have asked him several times in the past, but he would only return a vague smile.

And always say, ‘I will tell you one day.’

Friend, you were not able to keep that promise.

Another one that I also wonder about is Vaito, my adored apprentice.

From Vaito I sense a similar air to Friedenrichter. They comprehend the depths of the human heart, in spite of both being monsters.

And at the same time, they both possess curious values.

It’s as if they have a long, far-reaching view of the world; they give me that sort of impression.

The others do not seem to feel like this common point is anything remarkable. But I can’t stop thinking about it.

As a seeker of truth, I have already come up with several theories.

One. The theory that they have the ability to understand human psychology.

Vaito can read a human's state of mind from the smell of their sweat. It would not be strange if after repeating this many times, he began to understand human psychology in depth.

However, Friedenrichter did not possess these capabilities.

Additionally, Werewolves other than Vaito do not share the same values as him.

One. The theory that they were humans in a past life.

The possibility of the existence of reincarnation has been long regarded as being highly likely in the world of Necromancy. While no results have been observed, there already exists a theory for the art of reincarnation.

Reincarnation while maintaining memories of your past life is both theoretically and probabilistically unlikely.

However, if there are undiscovered elements, then there still might be a possibility.

But the problem is, their values differ also from the humans.

One. From another world.

Truly. What do I think I'm writing here.

My title of great philosopher weeps.

The continued loss of my sworn brothers, it seems to be affecting my fragile spirit.

I need to be strong.

Before immersing in old memories, there is a need for me to reinforce my fragile body and mind... no, remake it.

There is no time left to hesitate.

Oh, Friedenrichter. You stopped me many times before your death, but now I will open 'The Last Door'.

As I am now, one stray arrow would kill me on impact.

If I stay like this, it won't be long until we have to choose a new Demon Lord

once again.

We can't let that happen.

Oh, friend. Laugh at me for a fool.

No, return and laugh at me. It doesn't matter, just return to us.

Why did you just leave m-

This won't do. One becomes weak like this with age.

I should not be hesitating like this.

It may invite danger, but I will indeed open 'The Last Door'.

Of course, I have fears.

More accurately, I have a fear of the certain psychological changes.

And so, I will ask for the assistance of the person I can trust the most.

When his face comes to mind, I get the feeling that everything will work out in the end. He'll probably be the death of me.

Chapter 69: The Necromancer's Last Door (First Half)

And so it was decided that Glenstadt Castle was to hold a coronation for the succession of the name of Demon Lord. We could not proceed without any ceremony, and it would at least clear things up once and for all. It also had the purpose of being a memorial to the late Demon Lord.

Master had also decided to make Ryun Height her base after succeeding to the throne.

As far as public events held at Glenstadt, this looked to be the final one.

The night before the coronation.

In a room in Glenstadt Castle, I listened to Master as she spoke

“Being the Demon Lord is not about simply being ‘the strongest demon’. You must possess god-like power; transcend.”

“You can say that, but even you can’t be like the late Demon Lord.”

There is no doubt that the Master’s magical ability is world-class, but that is only when compared to humans and monsters.

She is not like the Demon Lord, whose power was like that of a god.

Master nodded at my words and continues.

“That is right. But as long as I take on the name of Demon Lord, it won’t do for me to be fainting every time I use some magic in succession.”

“You don’t even get that far in the best of times...”

Even when she does try to use magic consecutively, not being able to gather the needed types of power prevents her. There is a need for her to wait a while.

It is very similar to cooldowns for magic and special attacks in games.

“The truth is, there is something I can do about this problem of running out of magic power.”

The words were so unexpected that it surprised me.

“There is something you can do?”

"Yes. If I succeed in this, I too will gain powers equal to that of the Demon Lord..."

"Gain?"

"...maybe."

That's certainly vague.

"In truth, I should have tested it a long time ago, but the ever-worrying Demon Lord had long forbidden it."

I'm lost.

In the first place, I do not understand the need for Master to become stronger.

"Master, it is not as if you were chosen to be the Demon Lord due to your promising strength."

For the First Division; it was you and the late Demon Lord's long and unyielding relationship of trust.

For the Second Division; it was your kindness that saved them twice.

For the Third Division; it was your character.

The reasons vary, but they all accepted you as Lord for factors other than strength. If anything, I think they do not care too much in regards to your strength.

If that is indeed so, then it might be the first time in the history of monsters.

However, Master just shook her head.

"I understand that well. But I also understand that I cannot allow myself to be accidentally killed, either."

Master cleared her throat; suddenly a far away look came to her eyes.

"Every time a Lord dies, the subjects are shaken. If the second Demon Lord were to die right after the loss of the late Demon Lord, then do you not think, that we would be moving even further from the Demon Lord's will?"

"That's, well...that's true."

If Master were to somehow die, it would certainly cause all of us who are already dispirited to become even more so.

Master cracked a smile and continued.

"Don't worry. I have no intention of taking reckless chances. Theoretically, there is no real imminent danger to it."

"Um, that actually has a very worrying ring to it."

Master gave a forced laugh.

"You are truly impossible. I will explain it to you now, and I expect you to listen well."

An impromptu lesson now began because of my unnecessary comment.

"Necromancy is not mere sorcery. It is also philosophy. A philosophy to face death."

She murmured as she held her small hand over the flame of a candle.

"And Necromancers have something they call 'The Last Door'. Do you know what that is?"

The last door opened by those who face death.

"One's own death?"

"Well done."

Master gave a childlike smile.

"One may call himself a Necromancer, but as long you are living flesh; you will die. It is then that your true worth as a Necromancer comes into question. How you face your own death."

A long time ago, Master once came close to death, and she still hasn't died. In my previous life, this would be like being in a coma, lying in bed with a tube connected to you from above; but still living.

And so she has not opened 'The Last Door' yet.

Master nods; as if reading my thoughts.

"When I face death, everything that I am, will come into question. 'What is life, what is death', those kinds of ultimate questions."

"That's a hard one..."

"It is. But well, I've lived a long life. At least, I have come to my own conclusions on those matters."

Master laughed and sprang off of her chair with a grunt.

"However, if I open this door, I will never be able to reverse what happens. And I cannot deny the possibility that it could negatively affect my personality."

What the hell is going to happen?

Master looked up at me; appealed with a sober expression.

“And for safety, I want to enlist your help, my apprentice.”

“I think Mereen would be a better...”

Master shook her head dismissively.

“I can rely on no one else for this task. The person must be a full-fledged sorcerer, on top of being seasoned in the art of combat.”

“Oh, this sort of thing again....”

Out of all of Great Philosopher, Gomoviroa’s apprentices, I am the most accustomed to tough situations. I am a Werewolf after all.

And thanks to that, I’ve been forced to participate in many horrible experiments and rituals. All in spite of specializing in strengthening magic.

Oh, well. I will help.

It’s for Master’s sake.

“I understand. But I beg you, don’t summon any more devils.”

“This is getting old. I told you that was just an accident.”

Being chased by a devil that was summoned from a different dimension, the nightmare of it’s continued, vicious attacks; I never want to experience that again.

I thought it would return to its home by morning, but that devil fuck, he stayed and continued to attack Master for days on. He should feel what it’s like to have to protect someone.

If we ever meet again, I’ll tear him to shreds.

Master cleared her throat and announced:

“This one will be easy. Now, come down with me, to the underground laboratory.”

“Underground?”

“I’ll tell you some old stories on the way.”

“The old stories of the elderly are way too long...”

“Even a special lecture by the Great Philosopher Gomoviroa?”

Master’s voice echoed down the spiral steps of the castle.

“There was once a small kingdom of humans here. And this kingdom was ruled by a family of sorcerers. They used the power of sorcery to protect their country from monsters and foreign armies.”

However, this kingdom fell all too soon due to fighting amongst human; she explained.

“They placed too much confidence in their own magic. Blinded by power, they had forgotten what was important. That there is nothing more fearful than the malice of another.”

The king's arrogance caused the resentment of the courtiers, it is said that their betrayal caused the kingdom to fall.

The castle was surrounded by traitors, the royal family was seized and everyone put to death.

"I was the only exception. My mother put a healing spell on me that faked death, I slowly recovered all the while being in a state of apparent death."

"I see...what?"

"What's the matter?"

"So then, this is your homeland? And.. you are a real princess?"

"We were a collateral line so I was not in a position to succeed the throne. Though, officially, we were part of the royal family."

I hadn't heard this before. I'm shocked.

Master made a face as if this was nothing, and shrugged her shoulders.

"Do you not find it strange, that the Demon Lord army was so conveniently able to acquire this ruined castle?"

"I just thought someone happened to discover it..."

"No, in truth, I am the landlord of the Demon Lord army."

So this place was being rented out, huh.

"Well, in any case, this country fell, towns, fields, and forests were all buried. I thought it would be perfect for a little hiding place."

She had reached the end of the spiral staircase and now stood in front of a very old looking door.

"I had my throat pierced by a spear, the same as the others in my family. It was years later that I finally regained consciousness; you can imagine how scared I was."

"An unbelievable experience..."

It must have been painful, and so frightening.

"What surprised me the most was that the kingdom had fallen and become a

ruin. I do not know what transpired, but clearly, the traitors were not prosperous.”

It must have been an internal conflict. If that was the case, it is a well-deserved end.

“The rest of my line had rotted and turned to bones. On top of that, my own wounds had healed around the spear in my throat, the wound had to be reopened when I removed it. I suffered through that agony for three days and nights.”

I finally understand why Master, shy as she is, fears humans more than monsters.

It is no surprise having experienced such a thing in childhood.

Master explained that she then lived alone in the abandoned ruins.

Destroyed or not, there was no lack of places to live in the castle, and the outside world was much too dangerous for her; still a child.

“Day after day, I contemplated on my own. On why something like this had to happen. And I began to research Necromancy with the hopes of resurrecting my father and mother.”

Of course, Master quickly discovered that this was not possible. The irreversibility of death is frighteningly strong, no secret of Necromancy could make the resurrection of the dead possible.

While it is possible to conjure the spirits of the dead, this usually just amounts to a blurred apparition, lasting only a few seconds before vanishing.

And so Master had lost her reason to live. Now, living through time without end, she could do nothing but continue to acquire knowledge of Necromancy.

She says that it would be over a hundred years later that she would meet another person.

“At that time, I still had not found the answer to ‘The Last Door’. However, after being called a philosopher and other things and taking apprentices, I have finally found the answer.”

“Is that so.”

Master chuckled and looked up at me.

"Why, you are the one that showed me."

"Me?"

Chapter 70: The Necromancer's Last Door (Second part)

I wonder what master meant by I showed her the answer to “The last door”?

Then, matter answered as she removes her hat.

“When you were still young there was a time where Mereene broke my teacup, right?”

Did something like that happen?

I feel like it did.

But no, I’m not really sure.....

“At that time I was wondering why the teacup broke into pieces even though Mereene did not use any powers. Where did such power came from”

Now that I think about it, I feel like we did have such conversation before.

“At that time, you told me that ‘The one that is on a high place has such strong force’ ”

Hmmm, I can’t remember.

What I probably told her was about potential energy. It’s something that is taught in physics during middle school.

The teacup that was placed in a high position has a potential energy.

If you drop the cup, the potential energy will gradually change into a kinetic energy and the cup would be destroyed.

That’s all in to it.

It seems like master had understood everything just from the snippets of information I gave her.

An energy doesn’t start from nothing. it exists but it’s just not visible to the eye.

It didn't take half a day for the master to realize the existence of thermal energy and chemical energy on her own.

She's not called the great sage just for show.

Now that I think about it, it was during that time when master started to earnestly research about the magic that is outside of her expertise such as destruction and transition magic.

All her apprentice thought that she was just a curious person but it was all for her research huh.

"During that time I thought that magic might be one of those said powers. And even life itself."

"Even life?"

"Precisely. From the moment we are born, our life will start descending. And as it increases its force, we will just fall to the ground and break into pieces on our last day."

I see. Her interpretation of life to death is the same with the transition of potential energy to kinetic energy.

"A life that is broken can no longer be called a life. However, that doesn't mean the power from that life is gone. It just lost its shape but it still exists somewhere. If that is so, then what is there to fear about death?"

Master said as she put her staff to open the door.

What lies beyond the door was a little room. The blinking pale blue light faintly illuminates it. Although the atmosphere was quiet, I felt a flow of some disturbing magic power.

A magic circle has been drawn on the floor. By the looks of it, it's an old technique. Things such as insufficient symbols that are no longer used were drawn in it.

The magic circle itself was emitting a pale blue light. It seems like the light in the room was coming from the circle.

Master stood in the middle of it.

“This is the magic circle that I use to supply magic for my life support. From here on, I will close this magic circle and open “The last door”. You need to step inside the circle too.”

“Me too?”

“Yes. It’s for ‘safety measures’.”

Is it really safer inside of that?

I did what she told me and fearfully entered the circle.

The density of magic inside was quite high. If one recklessly use magic here, there’s a high possibility for it to get out control.

“Well then, let’s begin. No matter what happens you must not get out of the circle, okay?”

“I, I understand”

Master nodded once she listened to my reply. She then started chanting a spell that I have never heard of.

The magic circle was then gradually enveloped by a strong light.

“ugh...”

Master painfully knit her eyebrows as she clutches her throat.

And at the same time, some kind of magic power started drifting around us.

That immense magic vortex swirl around me and master.

Inside the magic vortex, master, with her little legs, stood firm and bid with a steady voice

“Death is not the end, it is merely one of the circulating flow of power. Oh death, come and grovel before me”

The vortex started emitting a bright light. It’s starting to get out of control. The part of the oozing power are gradually turning into light.

“Master!”

By the time I shouted, the whole room was enveloped by an overflowing stream of light.

This is bad.

“Do not fret..... I’m.....”

I heard master’s voice from afar even though she was supposedly beside me.

Should we stop the ritual? We can still make it if we do it now.

However, I decided to believe in master and endure it.

Before long, the stream of light gradually settled down and the only light that remained was the one inside the circle.

Due to the night vision of a werewolf’s eyes, it was too bright for me to see anything. I still don’t know the state of master.

At that time, I realized that the room suddenly turned cold.

I can see my own breath; the floor and the walls of the room are starting to frost.

And so, the immense light was completely gone.

Master was standing inside the circle that was still shining in a pale blue light. Nothing in her appearance changed. Maybe her skin tone has gotten a little bit lighter?

But then, the moment I saw that, I realized that master has completely changed.

When master holds up her hands, the temperature inside the room rapidly drops. Around her was radiant lights. The vapor in the atmosphere froze and the diamond dust breaks out.

She was probably absorbing the heat in the surrounding.

“As I thought, it turned out like this.....”

Mastered whispered and then looked at me

“I understood that life is one of the various powers that exist. Life itself is a power and a power is a life. I thought that if it is like that, one can make a life out of the power that has been absorbed.”

When master put her hand down, the temperature stopped dropping.

“I will no longer cause any trouble to the people around me because I will not run out of magic anymore and there’s almost no one who can beat me now. This is “The last door” the I entered.”

In other words, master has now become a “vortex” that absorbs magic... No, she absorbs all sorts of powers.

Be it magic powers, vitality or some kind of energy in Physics, she can absorb them all.

And now, master has surpassed life and death.

That is because nothing exists in the center of a vortex.

My voice barely came out as I said

“Ma, Master.....you’ve become outrageously powerful”

"So you notice it too"

She let out a smile.

"Right now, a person's life is like a mass of power to me. You understand what I mean, right?"

"I do"

That means all life and heat quantity will become her prey.

And not only that,

She can absorb thermal energy from a flame and kinetic energy from an arrow.

She can even absorb the energy from the enemy's attacks to neutralize them and use it to regenerate her own powers.

It's a crazy cheat ability.

Master originally had the ability to absorb magic powers since before. That is what she used in order to absorb the magic powers from the armors of the fake heroes.

But who could have thought that it will turn out like this.

“Umm, master”

“What is it?”

“Could it be that you have become someone who can’t be defeated even by a hero?”

I nervously asked her. She shook her head as she bitterly smiled.

“This “vortex” is not so big. It is mainly for the purpose of regeneration. My body won’t be able to bear it if I absorb a power bigger than this vortex. This could also be destroyed by a power like the hero from earlier has”

That means it also has its limits even though it can absorb attacks.

“The main problem here is my personality. For the current me, the life of humans or magical beings will become my food. Due to that, there is a high possibility that it can adversely affect my personality.”

“Please stop, I do not like that”

I can’t even imagine a crazed demon lord.

However, master just laughed at me.

“As long as I have a connection with the people around me, I won’t absorb a life without any reason. Take Mereene for example. She is a vampire but she has never done such thing, right?”

“Ahh, that is true”

Master then cleared her throat and glanced at me.

“That is why..... You know?”

“What is it?”

“You’re so slow. That is why in order for me to go mad, you, together with everyone, must pamper me and give me attention.”

"That means it is alright to act as usual, am I right?"

"Ye... Yes. That's right"

For a moment, she looked a bit disappointed but she continued

"Of course, I created some safety measures"

"Of what sort?"

"You were with me inside the magic circle earlier. That means you are recognized as a part of my vortex. Therefore, my vortex cannot absorb your powers"

"Huh? That means....."

Master cracked a smile.

"Precisely. Only your attack can hurt me. You can defeat me with just one bite."

I wonder why master purposely made such weakness.

Ah, I know now

"If ever I became conceited with my power or if I couldn't withstand the pressure and had gone mad,"

"Master, don't tell me-"

"I want you to eliminate me with your own hands."

Just as I thought.

"Don't worry, you will not suffer any effects even if I disappear together with the vortex. The "vortex" just arbitrarily recognizes you as one of its parts."

"I was not worried about that"

"If I'll just die, I at least want to die in the hands of my beloved apprentice"

I can no longer decline if she says that.

But I wonder if it's really alright to hand over such important role to someone like me?

"What are you going to do if ever I was driven crazy by my thirst for power

and eliminate you?"

Master sigh, almost as if she's had enough of what I said.

"What a foolish question. There is no way you'll do such a thing."

No, I'm the one who'll be troubled if you just believe in me like that.

"If I am to be eliminated by you who has a desire for nothing then that would mean you have a reason for doing so. If that time comes, I will willingly be eliminated and disappear."

No, no, no.

You don't have to say that in such a happy manner.

"This is indeed a brilliant idea of mine. This kind of sense of security when someone you trust will point you the way when you are lost; it is truly reassuring for someone who will soon become a lord."

In exchange, I'm now full of anxiety.

"You, becoming a demon lord's adjutant, it's not that bad of a role, right?"

"I-Indeed....."

Just when I let my guard down, I got to such a tremendous position.